

Leader with Associates Cooperative Agreement

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for

World Wildlife Fund

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Global Conservation Program Activity Report for World Wildlife Fund

Summary of Activity Status and Progress

INTRODUCTION

To pave the way for achieving WWF's global goal of conserving biodiversity in the Global 200 ecoregions, the ECOSNature project seeks to conserve the full extent of biodiversity in the Southwest Amazon, Atlantic Forests, Forests of the Lower Mekong, Sulu Sulawesi Seas, Terai Arc and Bering Sea ecoregions. These provide testing grounds to strengthen ecoregion conservation as an innovative approach for broad-scale conservation. This project relies on fundamental principles of learning and adaptive management which are promoted through core project management through various exchange, training and communication mechanisms.

The past six months of the ECOSNature Project resulted in steps forward for further developing actions to achieve ambitious, long-term biodiversity visions. The following provides brief highlights followed by more detailed information on results supported by USAID.

HIGHLIGHTS

- In the Bering Sea, critical support by Russia's regional governor and agency officials was generated in July 2002 as important steps towards establishing Berengia National Park. And in the Pribilofs, courageous efforts in advocacy have led to an unprecedented alliance with the fishing industry council for working together for better management of Bering Sea fisheries.
- In the Atlantic Forests, a presidential decree on August 12, 2002 officially created the Capiibary Ecological Reserve. This constitutes an additional 4,000 ha in the Mbracayú Priority Area that has now good protection status. WWF will support efforts to assure its effective protection.
- In the Sulu Sulawesi Marine ecoregion, the Bunaken entrance fee system, newly implemented in 2001, successfully generated over \$41,000 in nine months.
- In the Southwestern Amazon Moist Forest both CETEFOR and CIDEDER elaborated a proposal for the creation of the Altamachi Protected Area, which was approved by resolution of the Prefecture of Cochabamba.
- In the Terai Arc a meeting between the governments of Nepal and India produced an agreement to set up a Transborder Consultation Committee to monitor the progress on restoration of migratory corridors for megaspecies such as the tiger, rhino, elephant, and swamp deer.
- In the Forests of the Lower Mekong one of the largest protected area complexes in mainland Southeast Asia was created. And in Cambodia, WWF played a lead role in advocating NGO input on a forestry law, ensuring the law addressed both social and conservation concerns. The law has now passed the National Legislature.

Project Management

Strategic Goals & Objectives

To conserve the full expression of biodiversity in all EcosNature ecoregions.

Collaborators/Partners

- USAID – EGAT
- GCP partners

For EAI:

- SERNAP
- Bolivia Ministry of Sustainable Development
- USAID Bolivia

Summary

Core project management plays an essential function for facilitating learning and coordinating communication across ECOSNature ecoregions, the WWF network and the broader conservation community.

Results by Objective and Activity

Objective I: Mobilize Conservation Action on an Ecoregional Scale

Result 1.1: Effective programmatic and financial administration to advance conservation impacting ECOSNature ecoregions

As a team we continue to work with WWF staff in Washington, the field and broader expertise in the WWF Network to support exploring ways of advancing conservation in the leader ecoregions as well as provide technical assistance in exploring associate agreements under the LWA to expand USAID support in Global200 ecoregions. In this past reporting period, we paid particular attention to collectively identifying current issues across the WWF GCP portfolio to identify current issues important for learning as well as shepherd along potential collaboration with other partners as we design our programs for GCP II.

Result 1.2: Facilitated activities and communication as opportunities for exchange and learning to advance ecoregion conservation implementation

Workshops

Teaming Drylands

As a result of the Teaming Drylands workshop and study tour in South Africa last June, a drylands learning network has continued to develop amongst the eight ecoregions that participated with expansion to include an additional dry grassland ecoregion- the Altai Sayan. Since the workshop, follow up activities include: production of a comprehensive proceedings CD; a weeklong technical exchange visit between the SW Amazon ecoregion steering committee (of WWF and partner representatives) to the CAPE project in the Fynbos ecoregion to better understand how to implement multi-stakeholder, large scale conservation programs; a joint proposal with TNC for a global

Mediterranean drylands learning network; preparation for a capacity building event to be held in 2003 in the Mediterranean ecoregion (funding secured); initiation of a database of Australian dryland experts; conversations with UNDP to explore a new global pastoralism program and to explore new collaborations in 1-2 dryland ecoregions. A draft description of the drylands network can be found in the annex.

Communication

In reviewing options for broad electronic communication, work continues to make documents available to the WWF community and, when appropriate, to the general public via the WWF international Intranet and Internet portals. Documents are now being placed on both sites, and we are working with WWF International to influence the design/infrastructure of this to be able to serve as a broader "learning portal."

Specific Communications products developed in the last reporting period include:

- *Mapping the Connections: The Population-environment Lessons from Madagascar*. 2002. WWF Conservation Strategies Unit, Washington DC: WWF. (This is a dual language, English/French publication.)
- *Drylands Conservation: Proceedings from a Practitioners' Workshop & Study Tour*. June 3–8, 2002, Cape Floral Kingdom, South Africa. WWF Conservation Strategies Unit, Washington DC: WWF. (CD-ROM)
- *Sharing Across Boundaries (Issue 5)*. Ecoregion Conservation Plans: The Burning Questions and Tools for Practitioners. November 2002. WWF Conservation Strategies Unit, Washington DC: WWF.
- *Ecoregion Conservation: A Portfolio of Stories*. 2003. World Wildlife Fund, Washington DC: WWF.

Exchanges

The Atlantic Forest Ecoregion team identified GIS capacities as a major obstacle to advancing both a comprehensive vision for the ecoregion, as well as the more detailed planning and analysis required at the landscape level. Given more advanced GIS technical expertise and computer facilities housed within the Southwest Amazon ecoregion team, in September three members of the Atlantic Forest Ecoregion Coordination team traveled to Peru to participate in a GIS training and cross-ecoregion exchange program. The team was able to gain specific training on new GIS software and technologies, including more complex analysis using socio-economic data. The two teams also shared analytical methodologies for working with fragmented and incomplete biologic data. As a result of the visit the Atlantic Forest was able to complete a series of representation and other analyses required for completion of the Vision process. As well, basic GIS skills have been built within the team to form a foundation for engaging in rigorous and participatory GIS-based landscape level planning that will be undertaken with key partners in the region over the next few months using decision support systems.

Result 1.3: Facilitate innovative grants

Economic Incentives/Financial Sustainability

Under the Economic Support Initiative an initial socio-economic analysis of the value of flood in the Mekong River system was completed and preparations are underway to present findings at the 7th Annual International Conference of the Mekong River Commission in February 2003, a primary forum for influencing multi-sectoral decision makers. Consultants worked with staff of the Department of Fisheries and the Department of Agronomy in Cambodia to build capacities to undertake economic

analysis, including surveying of two local communities in the delta. The final report, compiling all available information begins to fill a gap whereby the positive benefits of the flood can be accurately assessed within broader decision and development planning frameworks.

Building on the initial application of a Community Jury workshop held with representatives from the national park, mangrove users, fisherman, scientists and dive operators to make recommendations on the management of Bunaken National Park, local partners are establishing citizen's juries to address garbage and pollution issues in North Sulawesi. This information is currently begin compiled with surveys conducted with dive operators in the region to produce a more comprehensive picture of the socio-economic context of resource management in the region.

Momentum on economic analysis of oil palm work in Papua New Guinea has led to broader coordination of efforts within the WWF network to tie ongoing field studies to dialogues with international investors in attempts to both introduce BMPs and influence investment decisions. In Papua New Guinea community surveys of social and economic values of resources were delayed due to concerns of the palm oil industry folks. Buy-in of these folks is considered critical to achieving a complete view of options for the region. After successful dialogues led by WWF-PNG and partners at the University of PNG have allayed industry concerns, surveys will begin in early 2003.

As a result of a training workshop last year that sought to identify global policy issues that impact ecoregions, a study was commissioned for WWF's European Policy Office to assess the ecological footprint of EU fisheries on the Bering Sea. This study was completed with a final draft report (attached) and a draft advocacy study in progress that defines recommendations. The conclusions of this study suggest that the EU's footprint on the Bering Sea is currently sizeable, and 'is likely to grow further with the EU-Russia fisheries agreement coming into force, the enlargement of the EU to include other significant fishing fleets from the accession countries and the implementation of the measures proposed by the European Commission to combat illegal fishing practices.' A final copy of the advocacy strategy will be provided once completed.

Global Trends – Agriculture and biodiversity

Primary activities over the last reporting period include follow-up to agriculture scoping exercises in the Atlantic Forests and Forests of Lower Mekong, finalizing chapters for the agricultural commodities book and workbook, engaging with key international players for influencing agriculture policy to benefit biodiversity conservation, and leveraging support of other donors and partners for further work.

Scoping exercises in the Atlantic Forests and Forests of Lower Mekong are completed with several follow-up activities in process including leveraging more support to achieve the recommended actions. (see attachment). Also attached are examples of the commodity-specific case studies that will be published by Island Press for broad distribution as well as adapted to be part of a user-friendly workbook for conservation practitioners.

Due to scheduling conflicts, the first IFC/WWF meeting on the development of better management practices (BMP)-based screens had to be postponed. It has now been rescheduled to be held in Amsterdam in March. After polling the participants, the focus of the initial meeting will be on soybeans, oil palm, sugar, tea, shrimp, and chickens. In addition to the other banks, manufacturers and buyers previously mentioned, Deutsche Bank will also be participating.

WWF participated at the recent meeting of the International Policy Council sustainability task force on Agricultural Food and Trade in London in December. This bipartisan group, convened by Unilever, Nestle, and Dannon and composed of manufacturers, producers, NGOs, researchers, etc.), will

support five case studies on the production and trade of 5 agricultural commodities (rice, milk, coffee, maize, and either soy or palm oil) and the likely impacts of liberalized trade regimes. The goal is to make this information available prior to the WTO discussions in Cancun in September.

WWF was invited by both the government and the shrimp producers of Madagascar to take part in a 3-day conference to discuss how BMPs could be used as the basis for permitting and regulating the industry. Both the government and the industry are concerned that without an appropriate regulatory structure in place, new entrants into the industry might jeopardize the environmental quality that has been maintained by the industry to date. WWF has agreed to help make this process transparent, rigorous and acceptable to a wide range of stakeholders. The lessons learned from this will be shared more broadly to benefit other ecoregions and practitioners where shrimp production is an existing or emerging threat.

In November 2002, 8 WWF staff met with the FAO in Rome to discuss collaboration on agriculture and environment issues. Initially, the two organizations have agreed to undertake a series of case studies to explore the potential for future collaboration. The 10 initial case studies that have been approved include:

1. Evaluation of 6 coffee certification programs--do they deliver on their claims.
2. The economic benefits of natural floods for agriculture in the Mekong.
3. Future expansion of Cocoa and Cassava in the western congo and implications for sustainable landuse planning and better production practices.
4. Livelihoods and Ecosystem Services--The role of cattle and cashew in Miombo.
5. Creating biological corridors--the potential of the soy sector and NGOs working together in Paraguay.
6. Water and Cotton--Lessons learned from Pakistan about ways to reduce water use in cotton production.
7. Grasslands and biodiversity--a strategic approach to biodiversity conservation in eastern Europe.
8. Public and private environmental service payment systems.
9. Marginal Lands--What do we know about when to abandon land and when to rehabilitate it?
10. Innovative equity models for reducing rural poverty.

These cases are to be completed by June 2002. They are intended to identify other areas of work for WWF and the FAO either individually or together. These include commodities that cut across ecoregions as well as specific work within GCP sites (e.g. Mekong, Atlantic Forests, Sulu Sulawesi).

Monitoring and evaluation

As part of WWF's overall measures and audit effort, several activities took place in the last 6 months which include exchanges, design of a measures and audit framework for WWF that includes GCP ecoregions, collaborative work with TNC in the Bering Sea, and involvement with the newly formed Conservation Measures Group.

In order to expand a broader portfolio of experience and learning on effective and strategic systems for measuring success of ecoregional programs, the Adaptive Management Coordinator from the Madagascar ecoregion and the ecoregion coordinator from the Gulf of California were brought in to help design and participate in a workshop for developing monitoring and evaluation plans for four priority landscapes in the Mediterranean ecoregion. With experience and lessons learned provided by these two ecoregions, the workshop which will take place in January, was designed to build capacities of Mediterranean program staff to develop comprehensive monitoring and evaluation programs that could be implemented with key partners. These results as well as targeted efforts in other ecoregions over the next 4 months will build on and consolidate the range of measures defined

and test run a measures and audit framework and be a part of a broader training and peer review session on measures later this year with GCP ecoregions.

In the Bering Sea, WWF joined the TNC-led initiative which included experts from academia and management agencies for defining ecoregional measures. This provided an excellent first cut at jointly tackling the difficult task of defining measures in complex marine ecosystems. We will help further this effort along with another meeting in February/March to complete the ecoregional strategic conservation plan that both TNC/WWF can endorse as a basis for completing conservation measures.

In addition to the Bering Sea, ideas for other places to collaborate with TNC, CI and WCS will be confirmed by late January. The first generation of these joint efforts will take place in the next few months as a way to launch longer term collaboration as reflected through the commitment of the Conservation Measures Group (CMG). USAID support and involvement in the early discussions from which this group evolved was invaluable for helping spur collective thinking across the conservation community on how we measure conservation success. As is evident in the mission statement attached, CMG brings a level of communication and collaboration to aid conservation practitioners and the GCP in particular. One of the first actions of CMG is to explore models for peer review evaluation based on standards for the conservation process. Potential sites, lessons and results will all be shared and in some cases directly integrated into GCP sites.

Engaging Stakeholders

Population/Gender issues

Over the past six months, key completed activities include a Population/Gender Forum in June, 2002, integration of results of population review and a focused effort to identify current priority population/gender issues that are facing ecoregions. From this analysis, future priority will be given to reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and migrations as they relate to ecoregion conservation. A brief summary of each is provided for information below. USAID funds will be used in the next reporting period in support of a migration study.

Please find attached the executive summary of WWF's Population and Gender review. Copies of the full review are available on request and provide a rigorous analysis of the range of actions WWF has taken over the last several years to address threats driven by population and gender dynamics. Associated with this review, the Population/Gender Forum in June, 2002 provided an excellent opportunity to convene conservation and population practitioners and donors together to specifically discuss issues through a biodiversity conservation lens. Key recommended priority follow-up activities include:

- collective communication on population, gender and the environment to policy makers and conservation practitioners
- collaborative field action in 4 areas
- capacity building
- advocacy
- monitoring and evaluation

The workshop results are attached.

Detailed planning is underway for a multi-disciplinary study on **migration**, to be initiated with seed money from USAID. Initial contacts are being made and partnerships established, including with development and relief organizations, and universities. Desk research is in progress, and fundraising

is ongoing. Many ecoregions have expressed interest in being involved. These include ecoregions in the GCP program, and also those to be supported in a major DGIS-funded initiative.

Ongoing family planning case studies to address **reproductive health** issues in areas with heavy population pressure and important biodiversity value continue in Solomon Islands, Western Congo Basin, and Madagascar. Discussion is currently underway with USAID's Office of Population and Reproductive Health, Bureau for Global Health, for funding additional sites and to enable analysis of the effectiveness of this approach for conservation. We are also very likely to receive a Population-Environment Fellow from the USAID-funded program through the University of Michigan, which will greatly boost our population-environment work. The reproductive health specialist from Solomon Islands and Judy Oglethorpe attended two population/environment workshops in DC organized by Population Action International on promoting population-environment projects and monitoring and evaluation, a valuable capacity building/networking opportunity.

The pandemic of **HIV/AIDS** is having huge impacts on conservation in Africa, through loss of capacity in institutions and communities, and impacts on land and natural resource use. WWF and African Biodiversity Collaborative Group organized a workshop in Nairobi to review the impacts and identify mitigating strategies. The workshop brought together practitioners from Southern and East Africa who have developed mitigating strategies, and the Kenyan environment and health sectors. USAID played a prominent role, outlining its HIV/AIDS programs, approaches and lessons. There was tremendous enthusiasm for the workshop, and great keenness to learn about strategies being developed.

As a follow-on we are now developing a program for WWF which will have the benefit of a Hubert Humphrey Fellow interning and is likely to include:

- Institutional responses for WWF and partners, in Africa and beyond
- Enhancing understanding of the complex linkages between HIV/AIDS in selected priority landscapes (including agriculture-natural resource linkages as agricultural labor is lost), and development of responses
- Work on longer term security implications of the pandemic, with respect to the environment.

While recognizing that the GCP program is focused on biodiversity conservation, these activities are framed with the goal of complementing GCP support for alleviating direct threats and wherever appropriate, leveraging the support of other donors within USAID and elsewhere to address the root causes of threats driven by population dynamics.

Result 1.4: WWF Bolivia assist in establishment and management of the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative Foundation (EAI) in Bolivia

This activity seeks to strengthen the level and quality of conservation funding in Bolivia which includes six Global 200 ecoregions: Southwest Amazon, Pantanal, Andean Yungas, Chiquitano Dry Forest, Cerrado Woodlands, and Central Andean Puna. WWF is working with P.U.M.A. (Fundacion de Proteccion y Uso Sostenible del Medio Ambiente) to establish the EAI. The primary goal is to achieve high standards of transparency, efficiency and accountability in the establishment and management of foundation funds.

Objective II: Establishment and effective management of the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative Fund (Fundacion PUMA)

Participation of civil society and high levels of efficiency in the management of funds are two of Fundacion PUMA's main paradigms. The Fundacion PUMA will be actively overseen by a board of

directors eager to promote and carry out its solid and results oriented performance. The following activities make part of WWF's support towards it:

Activity 2.1. Foundation Management

In December 2002, the Bolivian Government made effective the transfer of more than US \$ 17 m in favor of the Fundacion PUMA. And, on December 9, 2002 the Fundacion PUMA held its first official meeting to formulate the general framework that would guide its institutional work and to officially present its board of directors.

Thanks to this available funding, Fundacion PUMA will design plans and future lines of action as well as execute projects presented by civil society under a vision that provides viable alternatives for sustainable development efforts in Bolivia.

Activity 2.2 Support for Institutional Continuity

As a result of the availability of funds, PUMA began to organize its organizational functioning through the conformation of the Board of Directors for the Fundacion Puma. The founding member representatives for both the U.S. and Bolivian governments are:

- Mr. Ovidio Roca, Vice Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources and officially representing the Minister of Sustainable Development and Planning, Mr. Jose Guillermo Justiniano
- Ms. Liliana Ayalde, Director for USAID / Bolivia

Civil society representatives are composed of:

Mr. Juan Carlos Chavez Corrales, President

Ms. Miriam Nancy Alvarez Villagomez, Vice President

Mr. Jose Tibusa Matareco, Director

Mr. Martin Villaroel Garcia, Director

Mr. Daniel Salas Mercado, Director

Additionally, as one of its first tasks, the Fundacion PUMA convoked a consultancy to design, guide, validate and present its strategic plan. The initial proposal for the strategic plan will be available on January 20, 2003 and the validation workshop is scheduled from the 24-25 of January with the final report turned in on February 5, 2003.

WWF BPO support was also provided to the current President of the Board of Directors, in his previous capacity as a regular board member, to participate in the October 2002 RedLAC meeting in Brazil. A full trip report was elaborated by Mr. Chavez and is available in WWF Bolivia office.

Finally, WWF BPO continued to provide legal counsel and support as needed.

Table of Progress

<u>Benchmark Number</u>	<u>Benchmark/Output</u>	<u>Status*</u>
1.1	Effective programmatic and financial administration to advance conservation impact in ECOSNature ecoregions	On-track
1.2	Facilitate activities and communication as opportunities for exchange and learning to advance Ecoregion Conservation implementation	On-track
1.3	Facilitate innovative grants	On-track
1.4	Strategic technical advice provided in the establishment and development of the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative Foundation (EAI) in Bolivia to support Ecoregion Conservation in six Global 200 ecoregions.	Mixed Performance
1.4	Legal documents completed and now in the process of being legalized.	Completed
1.4	Operational manuals completed and approved by Technical Working Group. The manuals have defined the process of Board selection, which has been initiated.	Completed
1.4	Communications strategy developed	Planned for 2002
	Provisional Board formed and in the process of selecting the new Board	Completed
1.4	Board structure and responsibilities established.	On-Track

* Status may include activities that are completed, on-track, delayed, mixed performance, or cancelled.

Bering Sea Ecoregion

Strategic Goals and Objectives

The objective of the Bering Sea program is to conserve the globally significant biodiversity of the Bering Sea by protecting key sites and wildlife populations, as well as shaping development policies for improved stewardship in collaboration with local communities, the private sector, and U.S. and Russian governments.

Collaborators/Partners

Administration of Chukotka government
Alaska Marine Conservation Council
Alaska Oceans Network
Aleutian/Pribilof Islands Association
Association of Marine Mammal Hunters
Audubon Society of Alaska
Beringia Ethnic-Nature Park
Children's Library of Anadyr
Kaira Club
Kamchatka Fisheries Management Agency
Kamchatka Region Parks Administration
League of Independent Experts
North Slope Burrough
Pacific Environment
Pribilof Islands Stewardship Council
Russian Academy of Science
Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North
Russia Program Office
The Nature Conservancy of Alaska
TRAFFIC - Europe
US Fish and Wildlife Service
Wild Salmon Center
Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation
Yupik Association

Summary

Highlights

- This reporting period covers the summer season, a busy time for field site visits to the remote corners of the ecoregion. This is also the time in which our young scientists and conservationists are most active, conducting summer Living Planet Club camps, field studies, or other activities as a culmination of the work they have done during the school year. From Bilibino in northwest Chukotka to the capital Anadyr, school children were out on the tundra and coast, studying plants and animals and learning about conservation through a WWF-sponsored program, the Living Planet Clubs. As of this summer, several more Living Planet Clubs have been established in the

western Bering Sea coastal villages of Lorino, Lavrentia, and Uelen—the easternmost village on the Eurasian continent.

- Other high points for the last half year include the steps forward WWF Russia has taken toward shepherding a future Berengia National Park through the necessary procedures at regional and federal levels. This period saw the solidification of regional support, expressed by the governor and regional agency officials at a meeting organized by WWF this past July.
- In July, 2002 critical support by Russia's regional governor and agency officials was generated as important steps towards establishing Berengia National Park. And in the Pribilofs, courageous efforts in advocacy have led to an unprecedented alliance with the fishing industry council for working together for better management of Bering Sea fisheries. As a part of this effort, an unprecedented event for building constructive alliances between the fishing industry, conservationists and the communities took place with a meeting with key stakeholder groups from the Pribilof Islands, as well as representatives from the billion-dollar fishing industry. WWF made public this new initiative in oral and public testimony, delivered by Margaret Williams at the North Pacific Fisher Management Council meeting in December. A copy of the letter is attached.
- WWF Russia continues to get out the word energetically about conservation in the Bering Sea. Our staff successfully placed another article in Aeroflot's international flight magazine, *The World of Aeroflot*. They also published a Russian version of *The Bering Sea: A call to Action* (WWF's signature booklet on our conservation goals for the ecoregion), English and Russian versions of *A Climate Change Passport for Chukotka*, and a leaflet on polar bears. Copies of all of these publications are attached.
- On the Alaskan side of the sea, WWF continued its educational programs in three coastal villages. With support from the National Park Service, we initiated a new trans-boundary project called "Treasures of the Bering Sea" which will bring educators and school children together in a study and exchange of cultural and natural heritage of eight Bering Sea communities. At a "kick-off" workshop in October, our participating educators met one another, shared information about themselves and their methods, and brainstormed ideas about how to design the exchange. Over the winter the educators and their students will begin to develop the products and information they will share across the sea.
- Other exciting developments include WWF's work on the Pribilof Islands. The Pribilofs are the summer home to almost one million northern fur seals and four million seabirds—the Alaskan analog of the Commander Islands. We have been working with the tribal governments on the islands of St. George and St. Paul to identify conservation actions necessary to preserve the long-term health of the ecosystem, the fisheries, the wildlife, and the economy of these unique and highly productive islands. While some community members are cautious about change, others are anxious to change the status quo. WWF is taking a leadership role in catalyzing discussion and providing factual information to guide a visionary conservation strategy for the community.

Results by Objective and Activity

Objective I : Protect key sites in the Bering Sea

Activity 1.1: Establishment of a coastal marine zone for Nalychevo Nature Park

In his continuing efforts to create a marine conservation zone to further buffer the already existing nature park, Kamchatka Parks Department director Vitaly Menshikov gathered necessary scientific documentation from several key scientists from the region. Dr V.S. Levin provided an overview of the plant and animal life of the area in question; marine mammal biologist Dr. A. Boltnev described the marine mammal life in the region; and Dr. Vladimir Burkanov provided a letter of support for the creation of the marine zone.

With agreement from the Kamchatka Fisheries Management Agency, the Parks Department appealed to the governor of Kamchatka to create the Nalychevo Park Marine Zone. The governor consented and signed the zone into existence in February, thereby protecting 60,000 square kilometers of coastal and near shore marine habitat. Kamchatka Parks Department and Kamchatka Fisheries Management Agency will cooperate in the enforcement and management of this new coastal conservation area.

Activity 1.2: Establishment of a coastal protected area in Karaginsky District

On behalf of WWF, consultant Vladimir Kiprianov conducted field visits and negotiations with local administration officials in Karaginsky District. Working with regional experts, together they developed a plan for three new special purpose reserves, or zakazniks (similar to the U.S. National Wildlife Refuge). Kiprianov drafted maps and documents describing the areas and their boundaries. Among the allies Kiprianov made for the project was the head of the local fisheries inspection service, Mr. Vasiliy Permyakov. Permyakov helped to lobby the local Duma for designation of these three zakazniks and wrote favorable articles for the local newspaper advocating support.

Surprisingly, the Governor of Koryak Region (in which Karaginsky Bay is located) reversed an earlier position and came out in favor of creating the new protected areas. By this time, the head of the local administration of Karaginsky Raion, or district, firmly opposed the new protected areas. Without his support, the reserves will not be created.

WWF Russia has determined that the best strategy is to hold off on pushing for these new areas. In the late fall, elections will be held for the head of the district. Depending on the outcome, there may be a new window of opportunity to act quickly and designate the zakazniks.

Changing course slightly from the implementation plan, WWF decided not to establish children's education clubs in the capital city of Ossora, investing more funds instead in the clubs in Chukotka.

Activity 1.3: Beringia Ethnic Cultural Park and coastal protected areas in Chukotka

Although the pace for creating the park (correct title should be noted: "Beringia National Park") is slower than anticipated, significant headway was made this summer in solidifying support for it, including the following developments:

As a result of direct communication and guidance from WWF regarding the official planning process for creating new protected areas, the Governor of Chukotka sent an official letter to the Department of Protected Areas in the Ministry of Natural Resources. The letter expressed the governor's desire to plan Beringia National Park and requested a budget allocation in the federal budget for FY03.

In July, Viktor Nikiforov and Anisia Shepeleva held a meeting in Anadyr, the capital city of Chukotka, with agency officials from the regional branch of the Ministry of Natural Resources Protection. Nikiforov, a well-seasoned protected areas specialist, explained what was needed to designate Beringia as a National Park. Following the meeting, the agency representatives provided an official endorsement of the project and agreed to take the steps necessary to create the park.

In October, Nikiforov accompanied a delegation of U.S. National Park Service representatives from the Alaska region to a meeting with the Chukotka governor in Moscow. Once again, Nikiforov explained the procedure to the agency officials in Moscow. On behalf of WWF, he agreed to provide necessary expertise in drafting documents and updating the zoning plan needed for the park. However, a new twist in the road to success appeared when a newly-designated acting head of parks for Chukotka proposed that the government undertake a long-term, comprehensive study of the area to be included in the park. A decision to proceed with such a study would be a major setback, as it would be very time consuming and expensive. Furthermore, a detailed plan already exists from earlier efforts to create the park in the late 1980's. (This plan needs only minor updating). WWF will try to steer officials toward the more efficient path toward park designation.

Re: Educating officials about alternatives in economic development. In April, WWF's international Arctic Program held a conference in Sweden on ecotourism in the Arctic to discuss best practices in the trade and other aspects of conservation-oriented tourism. WWF-Russia invited Chukotka's Deputy Minister for Culture, Education, and Tourism, Leonid Nikolaev, to the conference, where he had a crash-course in international efforts in ecological tourism. He is now eagerly welcoming WWF input on appropriate ecotourism operators and methods to be promoted in Chukotka.

Re: Oil development on the coast. During their trip to the region in the summer, WWF Russia staff queried government officials and agency personnel about coastal oil development. According to these people, no coastal oil development is underway. (Incidentally, one area that had been drilled on shore was covered and cleaned up.) Thus, WWF Russia does not feel it is necessary to conduct any in-depth studies at this time.

Re: Other developments. As a result of the work in Chukotka catalyzed by USAID, WWF Russia has leveraged other sources of support for conservation programs in that region. For example, through the WWF Arctic Program's Climate Change communications project, WWF Russia has published a "climate change passport" which ranks the risk of climate change to Chukotka ecosystems. Additionally, new funding to the program WWF Russia is undertaking new efforts to raise awareness about polar bears—icons of the Bering Sea—and the threats facing them.

Activity 1.4: Development of Kommandorsky Zapovednik Area

Activity around the Commander Islands this year has been focused on the educational program. In absence of a director (i.e. local supervision) in the Zapovednik, WWF could not proceed with its technical assistance project in providing radios to the reserve. However we did further develop our contacts with the school in Nikolskoe village and sponsored a summer camp in 2002. In November of 2001, five of the pupils and one teacher had traveled to Kamchatka to participate in an "ecological marathon" for children. This event, and the forging of links between the Nikolskoe teacher and WWF's educational coordinator, has helped to strengthen the Commanders program by taking the teachers and children out of isolation, providing them with training and equipment, and building a sense of belonging within a greater ecoregion. We further strengthened those ties this past October when the Nikolskoe school director joined three other Russian educators on a trip to Alaska for the annual U.S. Park Service "Beringia Days" conference as well as a WWF-sponsored educators' seminar for Alaskan and Russian teachers.

To push the development of the management and enforcement component of our work, WWF staff Viktor Nikiforov and Margaret Williams visited Petropavlovsk in September to meet with enforcement agencies and the newly appointed Acting Director of the nature reserve, Mr. Dmitry Pitkelov. Pitkelov pledged support for and interest in shoring up enforcement in the beleaguered zapovednik, where poaching of the productive fisheries is rampant. Once the leadership appears to be stable in the reserve, WWF will proceed with its assistance to the nature reserve. In the interim, we are working with the Kamchatka Fisheries Management Agency to line up a specially coordinated inspection effort aiming at enforcement in the Commander Islands.

Objective II: Shape development policies for improved stewardship in collaboration with local communities, the private sector, and the Russian government

Activity 2.1: Creation of the Living Planet Clubs in Chukotka

This component is among the most successful and visible results of the USAID-funded work in the Bering Sea. The Chukotka government as well as the Pole of Hope Foundation, a foundation established with the governor's personal funds, have enthusiastically embraced the concept of kids' clubs throughout the region.

Results of the last six months include:

One of WWF's educational coordinators has developed a manual for other teachers and educators working with WWF's Living Planet Clubs. Soon to be published, it will provide ideas and instruction for educators throughout Russia who wish to participate in the Living Planet Clubs (also known in Russia as "Friends of WWF").

New Living Planet Clubs were created in Bilibino, Lavrentia, Lorino, Pevek, and Uelen. An opening ceremony was held in Lavrentia during the Beringia summer festival, where traditional games, dancing and whaleboat racing takes place each year. More than 100 children will be incorporated into this program.

Two WWF Russia staff members traveled to Alaska in October 2002, with four Living Planet Club coordinators from the western Bering Sea. The group included Nadezha Krupskaya, deputy director and teacher of the school in Lavrentia; Svetlana Khaletskaya, director of the Children's Community Center in Anadyr; Ludmila Romanova, WWF's educational coordinator for 25 schools in Kamchatka; and Marina Levaya, director of the Nikolskoe school on Bering Island in the Commanders. The group enjoyed meetings with Alaska educators from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and Campbell Creek Science Center. They actively participated in the "Earth Ranger Academy," an outdoor education program for school children in Anchorage. They also attended the National Park Service's "Beringia Days" conference, a two-day conference in which participants reported on their work throughout the region. Finally, WWF organized a "kick-off workshop" to launch our new international project, "Treasures of the Bering Sea" (see "Highlights" section above for more explanation).

Activity 2.2: Laying the groundwork for certification/economic incentives for fisheries conservation

After some delay, WWF has re-initiated its work on fisheries certification. Some material has been translated into Russian, and although it needs to be edited to appeal to a more sympathetic Russian fisherman's ear, it is a start. From September to November, WWF-US hosted Dr. Konstantine

Zgurovsky, a marine biologist with experience working in the private fisheries sector. Konstantine has been working in WWF's Russia Far East office but came to the U.S. on an international fellowship to study marine protected areas and fisheries management. During his stay he provided valuable insight into opportunities to introduce certification into Russia, and has described a candidate fishery which may be examined in more detail. Konstantine will be responsible for completing the certification brochure and will likely become WWF Russia's point person on this issue. For the last few weeks of his U.S. visit he stayed in Seattle, where he spent time with (among other organizations) the Marine Stewardship Council to learn more about the certification process and information needed to begin to consider appropriate candidates.

Table of Progress

<u>Benchmark Number</u>	<u>Benchmark/Output</u>	<u>Status*</u>
Activity 1.1	Establishment of a Coastal Protected Area in Karaginsky District	canceled
Activity 1.2	Establishment of Marine Zone for Nalychevo Nature Park	complete
Activity 1.3	Beringia Ethnic Cultural Park and coastal protected areas in Chukotka Region	on track
Activity 1.4	Development of Kommandorsky Zapovednik Area	delayed
Activity 2.1	Creation of a network of the "Living Planet" Clubs in Chukotka	on track
Activity 2.2	Laying the groundwork for certification/economic incentives for fisheries conservation	Re-invigorated

* Status may include activities that are completed, on-track, delayed, mixed performance, or cancelled.

Next steps

Next steps involve follow-up over the winter on activities that our international groups of educators proposed to undertake for the school year and for next summer. On the fisheries sector, WWF needs to hire a local coordinator (with other non-USAID funds) to monitor the work we will be doing in enforcement.

Success Stories

Success can be seen in the strong and positive ties WWF has built with some key leaders from the western Bering Sea. At the annual "Beringia Days" conference in Anchorage in October, Mr. Leonid Nikolaev, Chukotka's Deputy Minister for Culture, Tourism, and Education, praised WWF and its work in his region. More important is his growing awareness of conservation principles that can be applied to his field. This interest is evident in his current efforts to attract the tourism to Chukotka. In doing this he is particularly enthusiastic about embracing WWF's Arctic ecotourism program, which promotes a set of guidelines for sustainable ecotourism in the North.

Another example of regional leaders' recognition of WWF's work was given by Ida Ruchina, head of the Russian Red Cross in Chukotka and Director of the Pole of Hope Foundation, a private foundation

established with personal funds of Governor Abramovich. During presentations at the U.S./Russia Ad Hoc Working Group (September) as well as the Beringia Days conference in October, Ms. Ruchina mentioned WWF's Living Planet Clubs and the importance they play in young peoples' lives in the region.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

The last six months have been particularly challenging for our Bering Sea program, as we have lost three staff members. First, our very competent program assistant Angela Ross departed WWF, and was soon followed by field director Dave Cline, who retired after 35 years in conservation. Our long-time educational consultant moved into a full-time job and has begun to wrap up three years' of outstanding work for us in Alaska. Difficult economic conditions in the country, and in many non-profit organizations like WWF, brought the re-hiring process to a halt for several months. As a result, Margaret Williams, ecoregion director, has been coordinating all of the many projects without any assistance. This situation has no doubt slowed down work, but so far the program remains intact. As of 11/18, we will be hiring a new field director, which will vastly improve the situation.

In reflecting on last year's implementation plan, the writer of this report is reminded about the necessity of better gauging expectations and measurements of success. While the year has been one of growth and development and increased capacity for WWF in the Bering Sea, many of our results are visible in the relationships and attitudes we have shaped. These are important milestones that deserve recognition. Milestones such as the creation of a National Park must be better calculated, so that more accurate interim steps are recorded and can be charted as progress.

Atlantic Forest Ecoregion

Strategic Goals & Objectives

The purpose of this five-year project is to make significant advances toward the long-term goal of conserving the full extent of the globally significant biodiversity of the Atlantic Forest Terrestrial Ecoregion Complex and the Upper Paraná River freshwater Ecoregion of Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay.

WWF's activities for the Atlantic Forest Ecoregion Complex are directed toward four long-term goals: (1) mobilizing conservation action on an Ecoregional scale; (2) protection of key sites and wildlife populations; (3) shaping regional development to support conservation; (4) and establishing the long-term conditions and capacities needed to sustain conservation. This report focuses on actions in Paraguay for the Upper Paraná Atlantic Forest ecoregion (formerly referred to as the Interior Atlantic Forest ecoregion). The report also includes progress on some relevant actions in Brazil and Argentina, which are supported by matching funds.

Collaborators/Partners

- WWF-Brazil
- Fundación Vida Silvestre Argentina (FVSA)
- USAID-Paraguay

Partners implementing activities in Paraguay through WWF sub-grants with USAID funds:

- Fundación Moisés Bertoni
- Alter Vida
- Instituto de Derecho y Economía Ambiental- IDEA
- Guyra Paraguay
- NATURAL, Land Trust
- Red de ONGs Ambientalistas del Paraguay

Other Selected Partners in Paraguay:

- Fiscalía de Medio Ambiente (Ministerio Público)
- Carrera de Ingeniería Forestal de la Universidad Nacional de Asunción
- Secretaría de Medio Ambiente (SEAM)
- ACORDE
- ITAIPU-Binacional Paraguay
- Peace Corps Environment Program - Paraguay
- MaB (Man and the Biosphere – Paraguay chapter)
- ECOCLUBES
- CICOAM
- PRONATURA
- Pro Cosara
- The Nature Conservancy

Summary

Highlights

- WWF's Education for Nature 2002 Program (EFN) awarded scholarships to five outstanding individuals pursuing graduate degrees and careers in conservation of the Upper Paraná Atlantic Forest (UPAF) Ecoregion. Paraguayan Stella Mary Amarilla Rodriguez will pursue a Master's degree in environmental economics at CATIE, Costa Rica. Argentine Gustavo Sebastián Cabanne will pursue a Master's degree in biology and genetics at the Universidade de São Paulo, Brazil. Argentine Verónica Guerrero Borges will pursue a Master's degree in terrestrial science at the Universidad Nacional de la Plata, Argentina. Brazilian Milene Castellen will pursue a Doctorate in conservation biology at the Universidade de São Paulo, Brazil. And Brazilian Luiz Gustavo Martins da Silva will pursue a Master's degree in vertebrate zoology at the Pontifical Universidade Católica de Minas Gerais, Brazil.
- The WWF network has recognized Paraguay as a global priority for the development of a pilot effort targeting reduction of the conversion rate of Atlantic Forest to soybean plantations. WWF has identified new partners in Paraguay and internationally and has begun working with them to develop an urgently needed program for conservation of watersheds and high conservation value forest and implementation of better practices for soy cultivation in the UPAF Ecoregion.
- Seven leaders from three Ache indigenous communities have completed a training program that has prepared them to help in management and protection of the Mbaracayu Core Area and Biosphere Reserve.
- New conservation easements totaling 16,512 ha are being created. Seven of these easements are in the San Rafael Priority Area and three in Cerro Cora Priority Area.
- On August 12, 2002, a presidential decree officially created the Capiibary Ecological Reserve. This constitutes an additional 4,000 ha in the Mbaracayú Priority Area that has now good protection status. WWF will support efforts to assure its effective protection.
- The Paraguayan government is advancing toward qualifying for a debt for nature swap with USAID debt through the TFCA. WWF and TNC are collaborating to provide technical assistance to the process and to developing an environmental fund which could receive and manage resources for the conservation of the Upper Paraná Atlantic Forest Ecoregion.
- A manual for schools in Paraguay on the environmental problems of the Upper Paraná Atlantic Forest Ecoregion is nearing completion. WWF and the Peace Corps will work to disseminate the manual and integrate it in the school curriculum.

Results by Objective and Activity

Objective I: Mobilize Conservation Action on an Ecoregional Scale

Activity 1.1: WWF Ecoregional capacity established to coordinate mobilization of conservation action for the Atlantic Forest at an ecoregional scale

The WWF Atlantic Forest Team and a committee that included three university professors from Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay met on May 29, 30, 31 and June 1st to select five Education for

Nature (EFN) scholarship winners for the Atlantic Forest Ecoregion. The WWF UPAF Ecoregion office based in Asunción coordinated the application and selection process for all three countries. Five outstanding individuals pursuing graduate degrees and careers in conservation of the Upper Paraná Atlantic Forest (UPAF) Ecoregion were selected. Paraguayan Stella Mary Amarilla Rodriguez will pursue a Master's degree in environmental economics at CATIE, Costa Rica. Argentine Gustavo Sebastián Cabanne will pursue a Master's degree in biology and genetics at the Universidade de São Paulo, Brazil. Argentine Verónica Guerrero Borges will pursue a Master's degree in terrestrial science at the Universidad Nacional de la Plata, Argentina. Brazilian Milene Castellen will pursue a Doctorate in conservation biology at the Universidade de São Paulo, Brazil. And Brazilian Luiz Gustavo Martins da Silva will pursue a Master's degree in vertebrate zoology at the Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Minas Gerais, Brazil. WWF will involve them in developing conservation actions to achieve the Biodiversity Vision for the Upper Paraná Atlantic Forest Ecoregion. The selection of the 2003 EFN scholarships will be conducted country by country rather than by ecoregions. Applicants will be selected from five countries in Latin America. Due to the high quality of the 2002 selection process conducted by the UPAF Ecoregion team, EFN will continue to award 2003 scholarships to individuals working in the Atlantic Forest of Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay.

Activity 1.2: A network of institutions with a shared Vision and conservation strategy for the ecoregion developed

Lucy Aquino participated in the VII IBEROMAB (Ibero Man and Biosphere) meeting June 17–20, 2002, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, organized by IBEROMAB and UNESCO. Among the issues discussed in the meeting were conservation actions in the Atlantic Forest Biosphere Reserve, other potential Biosphere Reserves and a monitoring system for the Biosphere Reserves in Latin America. Lucy Aquino gave a presentation on “Biosphere Reserves as a Tool for Conservation and Implementation of Biodiversity Visions”. The discussions helped to clarify that Biosphere Reserves could be an effective tool to obtain internationally recognized protection status for the core areas, biological corridors, and sustainable use areas of the UPAF Biodiversity Vision—the Tri-national Corridor. Participants from Brazil, Argentina, and other countries of South America made joint plans to promote the creation of new Biosphere Reserves. The VIII IBEROMAB will be in Asunción in September 2003. At that meeting Paraguay will propose two new Biosphere Reserves in the UPAF Ecoregion: ITAIPU's protected areas and San Rafael.

The Nature Conservancy and WWF have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to cooperate on efforts to provide technical support and raise funds for protection of Atlantic Forest remnants prioritized in the Atlantic Forest Biodiversity Vision. This cooperation is also helping to leverage coordination among partners working in Paraguay.

Activity 1.3: Biological Vision for the Atlantic Forest refined and monitored

In August the WWF UPAF Ecoregion team met with the ecoregion Steering Group in Puerto Iguazu, Argentina, to discuss new analyses developed with the WWF Conservation Science Department in Washington to incorporate the objective of biodiversity representation into the Biodiversity Vision landscape design. Representation has been especially difficult to determine for the Atlantic Forest Vision because of the small amount of remaining forest and the total lack of biodiversity information on areas already deforested. The group decided to incorporate a landscape unit analysis using available data on physical features such as temperature, rainfall, and slope (which are thought to correlate with biodiversity) into the Vision. They also decided that a more objective methodology for incorporation of socio-economic (threats and opportunities) still needed to be developed. The Ecoregion coordinators for Argentina and the GIS specialist traveled to the WWF office for training in GIS Grid Analysis and to consult with the Southwest Amazon ecoregion coordinator to design an analysis methodology appropriate for the Atlantic Forest. The Ecoregion Team will complete this

analysis early in the next quarter. The coordinators in Argentina will write the Vision technical document; they expect to complete it by January 2003. WWF will publish the technical document electronically and submit a version to a scientific journal. A shorter version is planned in three languages for dissemination to decision makers and supporters in Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, and internationally.

Objective II: Protect Key Sites and Wildlife Populations

Activity 2.1: Establishing a policy framework for improved protection and management of existing protected areas

With WWF support, IDEA organized a workshop on legal tools for private land conservation. Environmental lawyers from several different Latin American countries and the U.S. gathered in Asunción to draft legislation that will be presented to the Paraguayan government to facilitate implementation of a strategy for private land conservation. This strategy includes conservation easements and private reserves. IDEA is now refining the draft legislation. Considering that nearly all the remaining Atlantic Forest in Paraguay is in private hands, this strategy is crucial for the conservation and sustainable use of the UPAF Ecoregion. A report in Spanish on the results of the workshop is available.

Activity 2.2: Protect and connect core areas and priority areas identified in the landscape design of the biological vision for the Upper Paraná Atlantic Forest Ecoregion

Activity 2.2.1: Cerro Corá Priority Area

With WWF support, the NGO Natural Land Trust is carrying out a project to create three conservation easements in the Cerro Cora priority area. These easements are crucial because the largest remaining forest fragments in this priority area are not under any type of legal protection. Natural plans to complete this work and present a technical report in December 2002.

Activity 2.2.2 Mbaracayu Priority Area

WWF and the Fundacion Moises Bertoni (FMB) worked with the Paraguayan Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Public Works to secure for a group of Ache a 150-year concession for conservation and sustainable use of a 4,629-hectare parcel of forest bordering the southeast corner of the Mbaracayu Reserve. The area is to be purchased for conservation objectives by the Ministry of Public Works using environmental impact compensation funds that are part of an IDB loan project to asphalt a highway. The Ache are indigenous people who maintain a traditional culture based on the forest of the region, but they and the Mbaracayu Reserve are increasingly threatened by landless people moving into the surrounding area to cut the forest. WWF and FMB have helped the Ache to establish themselves on this parcel and to develop a management plan. It is hoped that this Ache group can maintain their area as a buffer zone between the Mbaracayu Forest Reserve and the surrounding agricultural lands in the Mbaracayu Biosphere Reserve. The Ache have established the "Colony Ache Koe Tuvy" (in the Ache language, this means "New Sundown"). However, a group of landless people has invaded the land twice and continues to put heavy pressure on the Ache. WWF and FMB are collaborating with the Environmental Attorney and the Ecological Police who have strengthened law enforcement in the area to prevent the landless invasions and to stop illegal hunting and logging. However, the landless have remained in the area near the Ache Indigenous Reserve. Although both ministries agreed to the purchase and establishment of the Indigenous Reserve, a sudden change of Environment Ministers has delayed finalizing the formal purchase and legal

creation of the Reserve. WWF and FMB will continue to work with the Ache and the government to finalize the legal creation of the Indigenous Reserve as a part of the Mbaracayú Biosphere Reserve.

Seven Ache leaders from three communities have completed a four-month training program in protected area management organized by anthropologist Kim Hill (who has worked with the Ache for many years) with the support of WWF and FMB. The training included activities such as an overflight of the Mbaracayú Reserve to help the Ache identify the different ecological units in the Reserve as well as visits to other protected areas in Paraguay and to a national park in Bolivia managed by a Guaraní indigenous community. (A copy of the course report is available in English.) The Ache leaders are now prepared to help with the administration of the Koe Tuvy land and to implement conservation work in the Mbaracayú Biosphere Reserve.

WWF and partners have succeeded in effectively protecting an additional forested area on government land located in the southwest corner of the Mbaracayú Priority Area. The area was originally a 20,000-hectare forest reserve under the responsibility of the Paraguayan Forest Service, but corruption in the Forest Service allowed much of this area to be illegally logged and converted to agriculture by landless peasants. Concerned about this situation, the Joint Congressional Commission for Natural Resources came to WWF for advice on how to effectively protect the remaining 5,000ha of forest. As a result of the collaboration, a presidential decree officially increased this high value forest's protection status by creating the Capiibary Ecological Reserve on August 12 2002, giving the responsibility for the Reserve's protection to the Secretariat for the Environment (SEAM) and including funds for the Reserve's management in SEAM's general budget from now on. WWF will work with Alter Vida to coordinate demarcation of the area and a Rapid Ecological Assessment to ensure the effective protection of this new reserve.

Activity 2.2.3: Rio Paraná Priority Area

On April 13, 2002, Lucy Aquino gave a presentation on the UPAF Biodiversity Vision and WWF's strategy to 50 mayors of Departments of Alto Parana and Canindeyu. Held in the Visitor Center of ITAIPU-Binacional, this presentation had the objective to create synergies among the municipalities to implement conservation and sustainable use programs. The participants expressed concern about the practices of mechanized soybean plantations that are being allowed to operate in the region with no government oversight or law enforcement. WWF is now working with these mayors and other partners to develop an initiative in region to address these concerns and reduce the conversion of Atlantic Forest to soybean agriculture.

Activity 2.2.4: San Rafael Priority Area

Using the Biodiversity Vision as a guide, WWF and NATURAL Land Trust are developing a project to create seven Conservation Easements in the San Rafael Resource Management Reserve. NATURAL expects to complete the work by December 2002.

WWF and Alter Vida have worked together to implement a program in the Yvytyrusu Resource Management Reserve (RMR). The first step was to complete the demarcation, and the second step was to develop a Rapid Ecological Assessment. In the course of developing the project, Alter Vida identified significant conflicts due to the high number of people living and owning land inside the RMR. One of the strategies implemented to solve the conflicts was changing the status of the area from the category of National Park to Resources Management Reserve (see the previous semi-annual report). Due to the conflicts in the area, WWF and Alter Vida conducted a pilot project on crisis management in the Yvytyrusu RMR. The project strongly recommended the development of an environmental education program for the community. WWF allocated more funding to expand the project, and the education effort is now underway. One of the most important results obtained so far

has been the increase in the participation of the community and of the governmental authorities. Civil society in the region has increased its involvement in environmental issues and in the improvement of the quality of life for residents of the reserve.

Activity 2.3: Priorities and policy established for creation of new protected areas

Using the Biodiversity Vision as a guide, WWF and Natural Land Trust are creating in the UPAF Ecoregion nine new Conservation Easements totaling 16,512 ha. Seven of these easements are in San Rafael Resource Management Area (see Activity 2.2.4), and three are in the Cerro Cora Priority area (see Activity 2.2.1). The establishment of these easements will demonstrate this mechanism as an effective conservation tool for protection of private forest throughout the Paraguayan portion of the UPAF ecoregion.

Objective III: Shape Regional Development to Support Conservation.

Activity 3.1: Limit unsustainable use of the forest

Targeting reduction of the threat of further Atlantic Forest conversion in Paraguay, WWF has contacted several organizations, including the Ministry of Agriculture and NGOs to promote discussions on better practices in agriculture. In preparation for the meeting of Presidents of the European Union and the Merco-Sur countries, a representative from the WWF European Policy Office in Brussels visited Paraguay in June to develop a position paper on the country's economic and environment activities. As a result of this visit several Paraguayan GOs and NGOs are beginning working together to continue discussions on sustainable trade in commodities.

Lucy Aquino participated in a workshop with other members of the WWF network July 2–4 in Brasilia to develop a strategy to promote “best practices in agriculture for palm oil and soybean plantations”. A WWF consultant visited soybean producers in the Atlantic Forest region of Paraguay to study the feasibility of a program targeting conservation of high value forests and watersheds as well as best practices in existing soybean plantations. The consultant recommended Paraguay for this work because of the country's alarmingly high conversion rate of forests to soybean cultivation and because there are many small to medium scale soybean operations (rather than large scale) which are more receptive to implement best practices. The consultant's report is available in English. As a result of the Brasilia meeting and the consultant's report, the WWF network has included Paraguay among its global priorities to develop a pilot project to prevent further conversion of forest to soybean plantations. WWF is now working to raise the financial resources necessary to begin such a program. Acordes, a Paraguayan cooperative for sustainable agriculture, has expressed enthusiastic interest in partnering with WWF to develop such an initiative.

NATURAL Land Trust and WWF have begun a joint effort to promote sustainable management of forests in the UPAF Ecoregion. NATURAL is contacting landowners in sustainable use areas of the Cerro Cora and San Rafael priority areas. NATURAL is also analyzing the viability of Forest Certification (FSC) as an incentive for forest management in Paraguay's portion of the UPAF Ecoregion. An interim report of this initiative will be available in December 2002.

The WWF UPAF team has identified ecotourism as a possible economic alternative for the ecoregion. WWF and CICOAM (Centro Internacional de Capacitación de Organizaciones Ambientalistas y de Desarrollo), have begun a project to assess the potential for ecotourism in different areas in Paraguay and to build CICOAM's capacity to assist communities in the Upper Paraná Atlantic Forest Ecoregion to develop ecotourism initiatives. CICOAM has identified several potential areas for beginning ecotourism, and WWF has identified organizations in Brazil that will help CICOAM staff to increase

their capacity to assist communities to develop ecotourism programs. This program will train four Paraguayan professionals who will develop a curriculum for training landowners and managers of ecotourism areas.

Activity 3.2: Establish a land use policy framework that supports conservation

The training and logistical help WWF and IDEA have provided over the past year to the small but dedicated staff of the Paraguayan Environmental Attorney's Office (Fiscalia) have resulted in significant advances in reducing illegal logging in the Atlantic Forest. Thanks to a WWF EFN scholarship, one of the attorneys completed a graduate course in environmental law. The Fiscalia staff members participated in various training courses organized by IDEA and WWF. WWF and IDEA provided computers, tires, fuel, camping equipment and other crucial logistic support for field operations. WWF, IDEA, and the Fiscalia have developed a synergy in their actions and have begun to work together to plan strategic law enforcement activities targeting the areas of the Atlantic Forest most threatened by illegal logging. Recently, the Attorney General's Office created an Environment Division to increase focus on stopping illegal logging in the Atlantic Forest. The Environmental Attorney (prosecutor) and the Center of Judicial Investigation have indicted more Forest Service employees for corruption in approving fictitious management plans (which resulted in unsustainable logging and conversion of native forests in the UPAFE). The Environmental Attorney's office is now preparing for several hearings that will take place during the next calendar year. The Environmental Attorney's Office also removed the landless people who were illegally occupying land and destroying the forest in the new Ache Reserve. After the landless group again invaded the Ache Reserve, the Environmental Attorney has convened meetings with the Instituto de Bienestar Rural (the institute in charge of land reform and titling), the Institute of Indigenous People (Instituto del Indígena—INDI), the Fundación Moisés Berton, and WWF to develop a strategy to protect the Ache Reserve.

To promote forest restoration in Paraguay WWF is participating in discussions of two new national initiatives: 1) the National Forest Action Plan, coordinated by the Forestry Board (Mesa Forestal) and FAO and 2) a plan for "reforestation" completed by the Ministry of Agriculture with support of JICA. These two plans currently consider only exotic plantations, and WWF is concerned that exotic plantation forests could become a threat to native Atlantic Forests in Paraguay as they have in Brazil and Argentina. WWF will promote the inclusion of reforestation with native species in these plans. WWF will also promote coordinated discussions of the plans among other Paraguayan institutions and international organizations that provide support to the Paraguayan government (GTZ, JICA, IICA, FAO and the multilateral banks).

The Paraguayan Secretary of the Environment invited WWF to participate in the National Strategy and Action Plan for Biodiversity Conservation (Estrategia Nacional y Plan de Acción de Biodiversidad—ENPAB). WWF is participating in several working groups where it is promoting the Upper Paraná Atlantic Forest Ecoregion Biodiversity Vision as one of the tools to guide development of the national strategic plans.

Objective IV: Establish Long-term Conditions and Capacities Needed to Sustain Conservation

Activity 4.1: Increase public awareness of the value of the Atlantic Forest

WWF is beginning efforts to develop a national campaign to increase public awareness of the value of the Atlantic Forest. The Communications Department in WWF-US will help to plan the campaign. Walter Biederman, the owner of a prestigious publicity company in Paraguay, has offered to provide pro bono communication products to promote conservation in Paraguay. WWF is beginning discussions with Biederman to incorporate these products into an Atlantic Forest campaign strategy.

WWF supported two public awareness events in Asuncion: 1) ECOEXPO organized by the Union of Eco-Clubs during Environment Week (Semana del Medio Ambiente) and 2). An International Workshop for Environmental Journalists in Latin America and the Caribbean. Both events provided important opportunities for discussion of the threats and opportunities for conservation of the UPAF Ecoregion.

WWF is working with the Peace Corps and the NGO Alter Vida to develop and implement into the local school curriculum a program on the Upper Paraná Atlantic Forest Ecoregion. They have conducted several workshops that trained teachers from schools in the UPAF Ecoregion to include in their curriculum the solution of local conservation problems. A manual on the Atlantic Forest and its conservation problems is nearing completion. The Peace Corps will publish the manual and disseminate it to schools throughout the ecoregion in Paraguay. The manual manuscript will be ready in Spanish during the next quarter.

Activity 4.2: Develop funding mechanisms to provide sustained funding for conservation actions to achieve the Biological Vision for the Interior Atlantic Forest.

WWF is coordinating with Ambassador of Paraguay to the US, the Paraguayan Ministers of Finance and Environment, The Nature Conservancy, and Paraguayan NGOs to develop a Debt for Nature Swap with US Government (USAID) debt under the Tropical Forest Conservation Act. The priority use of the funds would be the acquisition of forested land for protection as prioritized in the Biodiversity Vision for the Upper Paraná Atlantic Forest Ecoregion. The Paraguayan government has appointed Sheila Abed (executive director of the NGO IDEA) as point person for the negotiations. WWF and TNC have sent a letter of support for Paraguay and have participated in discussions in Asuncion and in Washington. Paraguay has advanced in meeting TFCA eligibility requirements. WWF intends to provide technical assistance to this team to set up an environmental fund in Paraguay that could receive and manage the funds in a transparent manner.

WWF, TNC, and the Paraguayan Ambassador to the US have also begun to plan a gala dinner to be held May 14, 2003, in Washington DC, to raise funds for acquisition and protection of Atlantic Forest in Paraguay. The event should also help to raise the profile of the Atlantic Forest in Paraguay as a global scale conservation priority.

Table of Progress

<u>Benchmark Number</u>	<u>Benchmark/Output</u>	<u>Status*</u>
I.1.	WWF Ecoregional Team capacity established to coordinate mobilization of conservation action for the Atlantic Forest at an ecoregional scale	On-Track
I.2.	A network of institutions with a shared vision and conservation strategy for the ecoregion developed	On Track
I.3.	Biodiversity vision for the Atlantic Forest refined and monitored	On-Track
II.1.	Policy framework established for improved protection and management of existing protected areas	Mixed performance (On-Track and Completed)
II.2.1	<u>Cerro Corá Priority Area</u> Broader community actively participating with the private reserve in implementing a conservation strategy.	On-Track
II.2.2	<u>Mbaracayu Priority Area</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action plan developed by local partners to reduce breakdown of ecological processes and biodiversity loss in the Mbaracayu Reserve and Jejui Guasu Watershed Ache Indians involved in the management and administration of the Mbaracayu Reserve and its buffer zone 	Mixed performance (On Track and Delayed)
II.2.3	<u>Rio Paraná Priority Area.</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Itaipú developing improved law enforcement program in Itaipú reserves Itaipú staff trained to develop environmental education and ecotourism programs at the reserves Strategy for improved sustainability of agricultural practices 	On Track
II.2.4	<u>San Rafael Priority Area</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management plan developed for the Yvytyruzu National Park with community participation 	On-Track
II. 3	Priorities and policy established for effective protection of new or "paper" protected areas	On-Track
III.1.	Unsustainable use of the forest reduced	On- Track
III. 2.	A land use policy framework that supports conservation established	On-Track
IV.1.	Public awareness of the value of the Atlantic Forest increased	On-Track
IV.2.	Funding mechanisms developed to provide sustained funding for Atlantic Forest Conservation	On-Track

* Status may include activities that are completed, on-track, delayed, mixed performance, or cancelled.

Next steps

- Although partners in Paraguay are already using the Biodiversity Vision to guide their conservation efforts, WWF will complete refined analyses and will publish final documents for dissemination.
- WWF will work with the Paraguayan government and non-government partners to promote a debt for nature swap and a conservation fund.
- WWF will continue to work with partners in each of the four priority areas to improve effective protection of the core areas as well as to develop strategies for corridors to connect them.
- WWF will continue to collaborate with the Environmental Attorney's office to improve law enforcement to reduce illegal logging.
- WWF will work with partners to develop a strategy to address the threat of forest conversion to soybean cultivation.
- WWF will work with partners to develop a strategy for developing ecotourism as a sustainable economic alternative for the Upper Paraná Atlantic Forest Ecoregion.
- Advance strategies for increasing public awareness of the value of the Atlantic Forest.

Success Stories

Ten new conservation easements and a new Ecological Reserve are being created in priority areas identified by the Biodiversity Vision in the Upper Paraná Atlantic Forest Ecoregion in Paraguay . Together these constitute an increase of more than 20,000 hectares (2% of the total Atlantic Forest remaining in Paraguay) of high value forest under protection.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

Recent analyses of the quality of the forest fragments remaining in Paraguay show that many fragments are so deteriorated that urgent restoration will be needed before they can be viable as core areas for biodiversity conservation.

The Minister of the Environment of Paraguay was recently changed as part of a political negotiation in the Paraguayan Congress. The Secretariat for the Environment is very weak in terms of its influence on Paraguayan policy and its human and financial resources to implement environmental programs. The current Minister is the third to be appointed since the Secretariat was established two years ago. These changes pose serious threats to continuity and credibility of government environment programs as well as to collaboration with the conservation NGOs who are trying to compensate for weakness in the government. The current Minister has no technical understanding of the environment and apparently no commitment to conservation. He is delaying approval of cooperative initiatives such as the purchase of the land for the Ache Reserve, which were developed with NGOs and other government agencies under the previous minister.

On the other hand, WWF has learned that a small amount of logistical support and training for dedicated career professionals in the government (rather than political appointees) can yield

tremendous results. WWF's small amount of support for the Environmental Attorney's (See Activity 3.2) Office has enabled the staff to significantly increase law enforcement in key areas and develop credibility that is gaining them additional government resources to expand their work.

The Biodiversity Vision is proving to be an excellent tool to guide institutions in prioritizing activities for biodiversity conservation. Local, national, and international government agencies as well as NGOs are already using the vision to plan their activities.

Southwestern Amazon Moist Forest Ecoregion

Strategic Goals and Objectives

USAID support is focused on the development and consolidation of an Ecological Corridor (Amboró-Madidi) in Bolivia.

Collaborators/Partners

- SERNAP - Servicio Nacional de Áreas Protegidas (National Service of Protected Areas)
- DGB - Dirección General de Biodiversidad (General Directorate for Biodiversity)
- FAN - Fundación Amigos de la Naturaleza (Friends of Nature Foundation)
- CISTEL - Centro de Investigación y Servicios de Teledetección (Center of Research and Services on Remote Sensing) - San Simon University
- CByG - Centro de Biodiversidad y Genética (Biodiversity and Genetic Center) - San Simon University)
- CIDEDER - Centro Integrado de Defensa Ecológica y Desarrollo Rural (Integrated Center of Ecological Defense and Rural Development)
- CETEFOR - Centro Técnico Forestal (Forestry Technical Center)
- PROCESO Servicios Educativos (Educational Services)
- CI - Conservation International
- WCS - Wildlife Conservation Society
- Local stakeholders – Territorios Comunitarios de Origen – TCO (Indigenous Territories), Municipalidades (Municipalities) and Organizaciones Territoriales de Base - OTB (Local Community Organizations).

Summary

During the next five years, the development of the following three products will take place to ensure the conservation planning for the Amboro – Madidi Corridor:

- a) Conservation plan for the Amboro - Madidi Corridor;
- b) Monitoring and Evaluation System and,
- c) Creation of the working group for the Corridor.

In following the proposed objectives, continuation was given to the programmed activities planned for the current year. The following activities can be highlighted:

- CISTEL concluded with the vegetation map, landscape units and a preliminary zoning.
- CByG/CISTEL/CIDEDER and consultants have obtained new biological information on the following areas: Altamachi-Cotacajes, Pilon Lajas Reserve, Ichilo River, Isiboro-Secure, Amboró-Carrasco National Parks, Santa Rosa and Yuquis TCO and Madidi.
- CIDEDER has continued the negotiations with the government agencies in order to obtain the supreme decree that confirms the creation of Altamachi PA.

- CISTEL is continuing with the multi-temporal analysis for the smaller areas, which have presented higher indicators in terms of land use change. In addition, analysis is also being carried out at the municipal level and for vegetation series.
- The point which refers to the conformation of the working group has been delayed probably because it is too ambitious and also due to the difficulty in persuading SERNAP regarding its proposed structure.

The previously mentioned products will undergo modification for the continuation of the project:

- The conservation plan will limit itself to a conservation vision for the CAM and a conservation plan will be elaborated only for a pilot area within the Corridor.
- The discussion will be continued regarding monitoring and follow-up of global variables such as change in land use within the CAM.
- The conformation of the working group for the CAM will be reflected through an institutional group (Technical Advisory Committee) conformed by organizations such as the DGB, SERNAP, TNC, WWF, CI and WCS.
- A working group for the pilot area within the CAM will be formed involving all of the stakeholders in the conservation plan. It will be based in a municipality or association of municipalities.

Highlights

- The surveys to obtain data on biological and socio-economic aspects have been concluded by CISTEL and CByG. These biological surveys have only been concluded in three other sampling places within the CAM: Ichilo River, Pilon Lajas Reserve, Isiboro-Secure and Carrasco National Park.
- The vegetation and landscape unit maps were concluded by CISTEL.
- Both CETEFOR and CIDEDER elaborated a proposal for the creation of the Altamachi Protected Area, which was approved by Prefectural Resolution (232/02) of the Prefecture of Cochabamba.
- CIDEDER has redirected the attention of The Nature Conservancy and Conservation International. In the case of CI its support will be oriented towards the zonification of the area. And, in the case of TNC their investments, through PROMETA, will be devoted to the management plan and its dissemination.

Objective I: Consolidation of the Amboró - Madidi Connectivity Complex

Activity 1.1: Establishment and strengthening of the Connectivity Complex Amboró - Madidi Working Group.

This activity has been postponed due to conceptual difference existing between the two main actors, SERNAP and WWF. The previous and recently terminated administration of SERNAP was not willing to accept nor support the conformation of working groups of a corridor which will not strictly adjust to the official planning mechanisms. On the other hand, WWF has not considered necessary that the working groups form part of the official planning mechanisms which could be exposed to political priorities which are burdensome and slow. At the same time, the diversity of stakeholders conforming the working groups contemplates the need for utmost flexibility in contrast to what is imposed by the official planning mechanisms.

For these reasons, a change in strategy has been proposed in order to move forward in the coordination between organizations through the conformation of a technical advisory committee as well as the conformation of a smaller working group at the municipal association level that is selected for the pilot implementation of a conservation plan.

On the other hand, the document prepared by FAN for the municipalities summarizing the document “Towards a Conservation Plan of the Biocorridor Amboró-Madidi”, highlights in each of the maps the municipalities of the CAM as well as describes the importance of the CAM including its biological and socioeconomic characteristics of each municipality that forms part of the “Association of Municipalities of Tropical Cochabamba” so that they can evaluate the document and provide their feedback.

Activity 1.2: Continuation of the Amboró-Madidi Connectivity Complex Design

As part of the continuation of the process to obtain information for the design of the Connectivity Complex Amboro-Madidi, research has been continued and rendered the following results to date:

Eight out of nine priority areas (Northwest of Madidi National Park, the Tacana TCO, Beni River, Altamachi-Covendo-Cotacajes, TIPNIS, Carrasco and Amboró National Parks core areas, Pilon Lajas Reserve core area, Yuqui's and Yuracare's TCOs, Ichilo River) identified by FAN in order to obtain biological information were surveyed. The taxa selected for the flora surveys were: Orchidaceae, Bromeliaceae, Cactaceae (epiphytes only) and Passifloraceae while for survey on fauna the taxa selected were: birds, amphibians and mammals (Marsupialia and Rodentia). For the second set of surveys, two other taxa were added: Bombacaceae for flora, and insects (dung beetles and butterflies) for fauna.

Surveys were carried out by CETEFOR in Altamachi-Cotacajes, CISTEL/CBYG in Pilon Lajas Reserve, Ichilo River, Isiboro-Secure, and Amboró-Carrasco National Parks, Santa Rosa and Yuquis TCO, and through consultants in Pampas del Heath and Tocoaque (Madidi National Park) in coordination with CARE/WCS matching funds.

In the surveys, confirmation has been obtained for two new species of amphibians and one for Bolivia, and three new species of dung beetles for science and 16 are new species for Bolivia. For plants, 60 new morphotypes of orchids were found and 20 for bromeliads that are still in the process of verification and could be either new species for Bolivia or for science. In addition, it has been possible to establish that 70 % of the amphibians identified in the study are endemic to the CAM and 80% of the bird diversity found is located in the foothills.

Also, as part of the design process for the Connectivity Complex, local initiatives have been supported for the creation of protected areas. The proposal for the creation of the Altamachi PA has made several advancements thanks to the NGO CIDEDER. First, the proposal was elaborated with the support of the municipalities (the two municipalities obtained municipal ordinances in support). Then, the Prefecture signed the resolution 232/02 for the creation of the Altamachi PA with its two categories (Departmental Park and Natural Area of Integrated Management) for a total of 643,733 ha. Later, the transaction was passed over to the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Planning and from there, on to the Vice Ministry of the Environment, Natural Resources and Forestry Development and finally to SERNAP for approval and then to UDAPE (Analysis Unit of Social and Economic Politics -“Unidad De Analisis de Políticas Sociales y Economicas”-) where it is currently at this moment. At this stage an overlap with mining concessions was identified within the Altamachi PA and its creation was questioned due to this overlap of category of Departmental Park with the mining concession in question given that the category of departmental park does not allow for this type of activity. To achieve the final approval, the limits are being modified to be able to expedite the

supreme decree, especially since the mining concessions awarded are mainly for this year and a couple of them for last year. Coincidentally, the requests for mining concessions has been more intense this year.

Another important step that is taking place is the conformation of the Altamachi Promotional Committee, which possibly will later become the area's management committee. On the other hand, the Prefecture, with support from PIF (Integrated Forestry Program) has already disbursed its funding for the implementation of Altamachi. This financial support allowed for the bidding and hiring of the director and head of parkguards for Altamachi. In addition, CI funding has been oriented towards zonification of the area while TNC's funding, through PROMETA, has been directed for the dissemination of the management plan to be elaborated.

Activity 1.3. Continuation of the Biodiversity Monitoring and Evaluation System Design

The multi-temporal analysis of vegetation cover and land use change were verified in the field (1000 points of verification) and 4 areas undergoing a high process of land use change are being analyzed with more detail. The multi-temporal analysis has identified different land uses within agricultural and cattle ranching activities and two different types of secondary forests has been identified as well. The information regarding the types of forests, including pristine forests, is being cross referenced with the data forthcoming from the vegetation series found in the vegetation map in order to identify at what rate the vegetation series were modified. On the other hand, the different agricultural and cattle ranching uses are being cross referenced with the information obtained from the landscape units to be able to discriminate regarding different crops and the percentage of influence that each one of them has in the process of land use change. All the information gathered will be cross referenced with the data from the municipalities in order to obtain the deforestation figures and land use change by municipality. This will be done only for the zones with higher indicators of land use change.

A special classification was undertaken for the areas with anthropogenic activities to diminish classification errors between natural shrublands and those created by human activities. Within the uses, it will be possible to differentiate the important crops that are influencing land use change in a significant manner. This will be accomplished using methodological approximations. All of the anthropogenic analysis for each of the four years is being carried out based on the interpretation for the year 2000 when the area was marked off for colonization.

In terms to the usable area, which is determined by the geomorphological and edaphological characteristics of the zone, we currently know that the area between Ixiamas and Yucumo has suffered the highest rates in land use change between the years 1986 and 2000. In Covendo and Sapecho, there seems not to be increased expansion. This could be due to topography (low availability of areas apt for cultivation) and a lack of road infrastructure.

Tables of Progress

<u>Benchmark Number</u>	<u>Benchmark/Output</u>	<u>Status*</u>
1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ecological Corridor Working Group (ECWG) organized. Roles and Responsibilities identified among the group.[†] 	Delayed
1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field-based biological and ecological assessments completed to inform conservation decisions. Vegetation Map and its description document. Increase of conservation database. Digital Elevation Model of CAM. Creation and implementation of a new protected area (Altamachi). 	On-track Completed On-track On-track
1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ecological zoning and protection plan designed for the corridor, including maps of biological (species distributions, habitat and landscape characteristics, indicators) and socioeconomic (threats, focal activities) components. Evaluation of current status of biodiversity conservation (gap analysis, habitat representation, PAs viability). Multi-temporal change vegetation cover study. Design Biodiversity Monitoring and Evaluation System. 	On-track Delayed On-track On-track

* Status may include activities that are completed, on-track, delayed, mixed performance, or cancelled.

[†] Due to the delay suffered, we are proposing a change in strategy that will allow to advance in the coordination between organizations through the conformation of a Technical Advisory Committee and the conformation of a smaller working group at the municipal association level.

Next Steps

Because of limited financial resources and in order to obtain as much local participation as possible, conservation planning within the framework of this proposal will be confined to a pilot area. This pilot experience, however, will be systematized into a series of lessons learned so they can be useful for working –and improving them– in other areas within the Corridor when additional resources are made available. On the other hand, it is very important to establish a coordination mechanism among all interested conservation entities, GO and NGO, for which a technical advisory committee will be created. Among other things, this committee will be useful for the definition of wide-range, small-budget monitoring variables at the general (CAM) level. The initial implementation of the newly created area, Altamachi, will be supported as well, thus giving place to its subsequent effective management.

In the coming year (FY03), the proposed activities are as follows:

- WWF will establish a coordination unit among conservation entities working in the area (Technical Advisory Committee).
- FAN (Santa Cruz), CISTEL (Cochabamba) and/or Instituto de Ecología (La Paz), will finish developing the conservation vision for the Corridor, taking advantage of the new information available. The area for the pilot conservation plan will be selected.
- FAN and CEPAD will conform a working group within a selected area based on a “Mancomunidad” of municipalities to obtain a pilot conservation plan for this specific pilot-area..
- CIDEDER and the Cochabamba Prefecture will initiate the joint management of Altamachi Protected Area.

- CISTEL will continue to prepare a multi-temporal analysis in specific areas and on a small scale in order to introduce this data into the Monitoring System.
- A consultant will work together with the Technical Advisory Committee to select a set of variables for the monitoring system.

Success Stories

The creation of the Altamachi PA is an achievement worth highlighting given its importance in terms of representativity of ecosystems for SNAP and because of the current existing trend in SERNAP to limit itself to the management of the existing protected areas.

The lack of sufficient resources within SERNAP for the management of additional protected areas is one of the primary factors limiting the complete representativity of biodiversity in SNAP. One of the alternative solutions identified to increase representativity in the SNAP is the creation of municipal and departmental areas. Presently, Bolivia already has a municipal experience in the creation of protected areas (Tucavaca Reserve) which has not yet been recognized as such via a supreme decree. However, the area is already under management. The interesting factor of incorporating these levels of PA's is that they effectively contribute to the representativity of SNAP and involve other levels of management (municipal and prefectural). The municipal and / or departmental protected areas closely involve local actors and the sense of ownership becomes easier because they identify themselves with it.

All that is needed to be able to conclude the process of obtaining the supreme decree for Altamachi PA is the approval of UDAPE and the signature of the ministers. With this in mind, the necessary corrections are being made to the existing overlap with other types of demands such as mining concessions and it is expected that the signature of the decree will not be delayed. However, recently the Prefecture of Cochabamba, together with the C-23/CETEFOR Project, has already issued a bidding for the hiring of the director and head of parkguards for the Altamachi PA, indicating the progress of the implementation of the area.

Challenges and lessons learned

The priority in establishing the representativity of the SNAP (National System of Protected Areas) is the aspiration of SERNAP forthcoming from a commitment engaged with GEF II Project and WWF considering important to maintain a representative sample of the biodiversity within the priority G200 ecoregions and the TDP's for forests to achieve a representative network of protected areas in those countries with high biodiversity levels (Bolivia is among the 15 countries worldwide considered as mega-diverse. Johannesburg Summit, Sept. 2002). With this in mind, WWF-Bolivia supported CETEFOR/CISTEL in the elaboration of a proposal for the creation of a protected area in Alatomachi-Cotacajes, from which an excellent proposal was born for the creation of the Altamachi PA with two categories (national park and integrated natural management area), which received support from the two municipalities of Tiquipaya and Morochata and created under Prefectural Resolution 232/02. However, the backing for its creation through a supreme decree has been slow and lacking political goodwill both in the previous and current administration. During the process and negotiation with the Prefecture significant time was invested as well as with the Ministry and Vice Ministry. The same occurred between the Ministry and Vice Ministry and SERNAP and later with other agencies such as UDAPE. All of the time invested is reflected in that the latter detected overlaps of the PA with the mining concessions within the area. This situation was known at the time of the elaboration of the proposal but were all located within the proposed Natural Area of Integrated Management but at the

time of revision new areas were discovered within the limits of the national park where these types of activities are not allowed – all of this due to the slowness of the creation process considering that the mining concessions were only recently awarded (the majority during this year). In other words, those agencies that utilize natural resources, especially those utilizing non-renewable resources, aside from receiving preferential treatment under current legislation, act much more quickly than those agencies that should be supporting conservation and the management of natural resources. If the process continues to be delayed, it is likely that we will have to reduce the area destined as national park because during the last month four new requests were presented to the Superintendency for Mining and there is only one thing that could impede the granting of the concessions such as an overlap of concessions or, if the area has already been declared by a supreme decree as Altamachi PA.

The experience of this process shows that it is always necessary to ensure that all of the state agencies that play a role in the administration of natural resources should be consulted in view of the fact that communication between them is poor and it is not synchronized.

It is also obvious that there are processes or demands that are more agile than others in soliciting the use of natural resources as demonstrated by the efforts expended to obtain mining concessions in comparison with those efforts for the creation of the PA. This suggests the need to influence national policies so that respective government branches coordinate more adequately and even more so at the municipal level, which is responsible for the management of their natural resources.

In the specific case of Altamachi, the challenge has been set to ensure that new concessions are not awarded and that municipal and prefectural decisions be respected. In addition, that the problem at hand be resolved technically via a reclassification of the area overlapping with the concession and an immediate issuance of the supreme decree indicating the limits and categories defined.

Forests of the Lower Mekong

Strategic Goals & Objectives

The Forests of the Lower Mekong (FLM) is an ecoregional complex, which contains the Greater Annamites and the Central Indochina Dry Forests Ecoregions: two of WWF's Global 200 most endangered spaces. The FLM comprises an incredibly high diversity of habitats including deciduous dipterocarp forests, moist evergreen forests, karst limestone forests, open grasslands and savannas, upland plateaus, wetlands, and pristine riparian environments. Habitats in the FLM support diverse, abundant, and rare wildlife and are highly interrelated ecologically. Covering much of the region referred to as Indochina, these ecoregions have been strongly connected both politically and socially.

The goal of the ecoregion program for the Forests of the Lower Mekong is: to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and maintain the integrity of biological processes across the Forests of the Lower Mekong.

The objectives for the program are to:

- Mobilize conservation on an ecoregional scale
- Promote integrated conservation and development in priority landscapes of the Forests of the Lower Mekong
- Promote a supportive policy environment for conservation and sustainable natural resource management
- Lay the foundation for lasting conservation
- Promote the conservation of the marine biodiversity of Con Dao National Park

Collaborators/Partners

Greater Annamites Ecoregion

Government of Vietnam:

- Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (Forest Protection Department; International Cooperation Department; Department for Forestry Development; Forest Inventory and Planning Institute); (central and provisional levels)
- National Centre for Natural Sciences and Technology: Institute for Ecological and Biological Resources
- Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment (National Environment Agency)
- Representatives of Provincial level People's Committees.
- Central Committee for Ethnic Minorities and Mountainous Areas (CEMMA)
- National University of Vietnam; Xuan Mai Forestry College

Government of Lao PDR:

- Department of Forestry and other relevant government Ministries and Departments

International NGOs:

- TRAFFIC Indochina Program (SE Asia); IUCN; Birdlife International; CARE International; SNV; Wildlife Conservation Society
- American Museum of Natural History
- United Nation Development Program (UNDP)

Dry Forests of Central Indochina Ecoregion

Royal Government of Cambodia:

- Ministry of Environment (MOE) and Provincial Environment Departments; Department of Nature Conservation and Protection (DNCP)
- Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; (MAFF) Department of Forestry and Wildlife (DFW)

International NGOs:

- Wildlife Conservation Society
- Flora and Fauna International
- TRAFFIC Indochina Program (SE Asia)
- International Development Research Centre (IDRC)
- Oxfam US

Summary

In the **Greater Annamites** ecoregion, WWF has established a program of large-scale strategic conservation through which to identify and implement the necessary action to preserve biodiversity for future generations. Initial work in the ecoregion focused on building consensus among Vietnamese and Laotian stakeholders for a common vision, followed by strategic planning at the landscape and provincial scales. Over the course of this year and especially this reporting period, planning has moved to the background while conservation action has moved to the fore. In addition, what began as a WWF initiative in partnership with government and community stakeholders is now becoming a coordinated effort to conserve the Annamites by a multi-sector partnership network which includes not only other conservation NGOs but also development organizations such as CARE.

In the **Dry Forests** ecoregion, WWF has made significant strides in influencing national policy in Cambodia to reflect conservation needs. We continued steadily to fill the wide gaps in knowledge and capacity that characterize Cambodian society. We have succeeded in focusing not only our own efforts but those of other international conservation organizations on the areas of highest priority as identified in the FLM Biovision—WWF, WCS, and CI are each taking the lead in the Eastern Plains, Northern Plains, and Cardamom's respectively.

The **Central Annamites** and **Eastern Plains** landscapes are the two cornerstones of the ecoregion program. Through these two initiatives WWF has successfully established partnerships across sectors and strategic planning processes across provincial and national boundaries. We have piloted an innovative new approach to landuse planning and management: Management of Strategic Areas for Integrated Conservation (MOSAIC) in each of these landscapes. Through MOSAIC, we are targeting underlying issues such as wildlife trade and government strategies that affect conservation at multiple sites and threaten achievement of long-term conservation goals.

Highlights

- One of the largest Protected Area Complexes in mainland South-east Asia created in the Eastern Plains landscape of the Central Indochina Dry Forests of Cambodia. The Prime Minister finalized the designation of three large conservation reserves spread across Cambodia, one of which is the Mondulkiri Protection Forest. MPF, with its 429,438 hectares, is the largest protected area in Cambodia. It borders on Lomphat, Phnom Prich, and Phnom Nam Lyr Wildlife Sanctuaries, and Yok Don National Park in Vietnam, creating the largest contiguous protected area complex on mainland Southeast Asia at 1,009,938 hectares.

- Forestry Law passes National Legislature in Cambodia. Forestry legislation in Cambodia has been in various stages of development for much of the past five years. Over the past two years, WWF played a lead role in raising awareness regarding weaknesses in the draft law and successfully advocating for NGO input in order to ensure the law addresses both social and conservation concerns. The new law, with NGO input, has now passed the National Legislature.
- Forest Certification back on track in Lao PDR. In recent months significant progress has been made to rekindle forest management certification activities. During August WWF designed and co-facilitated a national level workshop on forest certification and sustainable forest management in Lao. The workshop in Vientiane made significant steps towards putting certification back on the agenda and building awareness and support amongst government and private sector individuals. WWF are now in the process of preparing for the implementation of a project aimed to establish the ecoregion's first certified community owned and managed forest.
- Management of Strategic Areas for Integrated Conservation – the MOSAIC methodology. This year saw the launch of an innovative project aimed at conserving an entire landscape by creating a mosaic of complimentary land-uses which ensure multi-benefits for local people and provincial/national economies while meeting biodiversity targets. By combining, biological assessments and economic and social assessments of resource use and land-use planning, the project will establish integrated plans for conservation in areas of strategic conservation importance. The project is being piloted in two provinces, Monduliri (Cambodia) and Quang Nam (Vietnam) provinces.
- World Bank pressure for forestry reform in Cambodia. WWF Cambodia has been working with other NGOs and other donors to persuade the World Bank to more strongly use its influence with DFW and the Government to leverage changes in the timber concession system. This summer, the World Bank delayed giving an installment of a Structural Adjustment Credit to Cambodia (originally scheduled to be released on 30 September) until the timber concession management plans are made available for public review and comments.
- Coral species previously unrecorded in Vietnam found around Con Dao. In August and September, a survey of the coral reefs at 19 locations around the Con Dao Islands reported a total of 280 reef-building coral species, plus 20 other corals and related species were recorded. The present survey recorded ca. 80 species and 1 genus that were previously unrecorded from the islands. Eleven of these coral species are new distribution records for Vietnam. Field identifications and photographs were not sufficiently definitive to allow precise species identification of all corals present, and it is hoped that detailed taxonomic study may reveal additional species, new distribution records and un-described species.
- Greater Annamites film completed. WWF produced and directed a conservation awareness film on the Greater Annamites ecoregion aimed at Vietnamese and Lao PDR television audiences. The film, completed in August 2002, is 11 minutes long. It was shot and edited by a BBC wildlife cameraman who volunteered his services. It is the first film to present the biodiversity importance of the Greater Annamites, the threats to its integrity, and need for action to conserve its value for the people of Vietnam and Lao PDR. The film is part of a package of communication tools to be presented as the Vietnamese contribution to the International Year of the Mountain in partnership with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization and CEMMA. The film will be premiered in Vietnam in late November.

Results by Objective and Activity

Objective I: Mobilize conservation on an ecoregional scale

Activity 1.1: Strengthen Ecoregion Program Management Capacity

Seng Teak, the Eastern Plains Coordinator, left the program in July to undertake a Master's Degree Program at Yale University. A successor was hired, but unfortunately resigned soon after starting work when his home Ministry suddenly decided it could not second him on a full-time basis to WWF. A new replacement is now being sought.

Nguyen Thi Dao, formally the Ecoregion Officer for the FLM ecoregion program, returned in September to rejoin the program supporting the development and implementation of the program for the Greater Annamites. Dao completed her Master's Degree in Conservation Biology at the Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology in the University of Kent, UK. Dao undertook her research project as part of her studies investigating the feasibility of local participation in management of Song Thanh Nature Reserve in the Central Annamites landscape (see Activity 2.1).

Activity 1.2: Communicating the ecoregion program

The activities planned this year were designed to: (1) identify opportunities for enhancing ecoregion conservation success; (2) build awareness of the global conservation significance of the two focal ecoregions, and (3) prepare strategies and tactics for communicating both the threats to biodiversity and conservation achievements to multiple audiences.

Communication strategy and Action Plan

In September, WWF completed a communication strategy and action plan for the Greater Annamites and Dry Forests ecoregions. The strategy details the key communication messages the ecoregion program wants to send and what mechanisms and approaches will be used to communicate those messages to each program partner and stakeholder. Activities identified in the action plan are underway, including a set of up-datable brochures and a website for the ecoregion program.

Greater Annamites Interactive CD-Rom Developed

An interactive CD-Rom entitled "*The Greater Annamites – An Interactive Guide*" has been produced. The CD-Rom is designed to showcase the Greater Annamites Ecoregion, particularly the unique community of species that characterize it. Included in the CD is an informative photo-story, an interactive tour of the ecoregion, eight reports, as well as additional features like downloadable screensavers and games.

Greater Annamites Film and the International Year of the Mountains

WWF produced and directed an eleven minute film about the Greater Annamites for Vietnamese and Lao PDR television audiences. A British Broadcasting Company Wildlife Film Unit cameraman volunteered his time to film and edit the piece. The film is the first to present the importance of the Greater Annamites, the threats to its integrity and need for action to conserve its value for the people of Vietnam and Lao PDR. It was prepared as part of a package of communication activities to be presented as the Vietnamese contribution to the International Year of the Mountain in partnership with the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation and CEMMA. The film will be premiered in Vietnam in November.

Central Indochina Dry Forests promotional materials developed

- A Dry Forest brochure emphasizing the economic and social potential benefits of restoring the Dry Forests was completed in English. A Cambodian version also is in the last stages of preparation.
- The Dry Forest team in Cambodia seized upon the opportunity presented by the WSSD Summit in Johannesburg this year by producing a set of materials to support a series of presentations and consultations with the Cambodian delegation. The materials were used to build awareness of the role of the biodiversity of the Dry Forests in the future economy and well-being of Cambodia in order for the delegates to include the dry forests in the portfolio of conservation interests in their country. This effort helped to place the Dry Forests as an ecoregion as one of their key priorities.

Activity 1.3: Consolidating the strategies for the Ecoregion Program

Initially consolidating strategies for the ecoregion program referred to the consolidation of WWF's ongoing site-based projects in the region into a coherent ecoregional program. Now, this activity remains relevant but with a new scope. In order to maximize the success of conservation in the FLM, WWF is piloting large-scale partnership networks in the Greater Annamites and Dry Forests ecoregions. These partnership networks will be made up of national and international stakeholders from a variety of sectors. WWF's goal is for the network partners to jointly develop a common set of objectives for the conservation and development of the each ecoregion and work toward those objectives in coordination with each other. To initiate this process, WWF has drafted initial Greater Annamites and Dry Forests Action Plans. The Annamites partnership is under discussion and partner conservation organizations have committed verbally to such a partnership. The Dry forests partnership network at present remains an informal coalition that meets regularly and works together on common tasks such as the biovision, environmental education strategies, and wildlife law.

In the near term, these Action Plans will guide the activities of WWF and its current program and project partners. In the medium to longer-term, this draft Action Plan will be the starting point for the development of a full Action Plan negotiated with and endorsed by all stakeholders. The draft Action Plan will focus discussions and make it easier to develop a full Action Plan in a complex, multi-country, multi-stakeholder program environment. The plans include a basic system for monitoring and evaluation based on a set of quantifiable targets.

Objective II: Promote integrated conservation and development in priority landscapes of the Forests of the Lower Mekong

In both the Central Annamites and the Eastern Plains landscapes, WWF is strengthening the institutional capacity of provinces to ensure better governance of natural resources and exploring, in partnership with local stakeholders, management options for areas of strategic conservation importance. In both landscapes, joint WWF/local teams have surveyed areas previously unexplored by biologists, resulting in data essential to planning, survey experience for local management authorities, and a better understanding of current threats. WWF is strategically putting in place the policy, capacity, and knowledge necessary for self-sustaining conservation.

Activity 2.1: Develop and strengthen the Central Annamites Conservation Initiative, Greater Annamites Ecoregion

The Central Annamites is threatened by commercialization of agriculture, human encroachment, infrastructure development and illegal collection of timber and non-timber forest products. To combat these threats, WWF is working to influence government decision-making regarding land management and natural resource use. First, we gathered the necessary biological and socio-economic data on the landscape to determine areas of high priority for conservation and to identify opportunities to have

significant impact. We then brought this information to the attention of decision-makers at the local, provincial, and national levels and facilitated creation of a biological vision for conservation success in the Central Annamites, in balance with sustainable development. At the same time we created a multi-stakeholder Steering Committee to guide the Initiative and ensure broad ownership of its results. Our next step was to facilitate development of a conservation strategy for the Central Annamites.

Conservation Strategy Development

The draft conservation strategy for the Central Annamites was completed in September 2002. The strategy presents a vision, objectives and a set of clearly defined conservation targets, an analyses of the threats and constraints that are presently hampering efforts to meet these targets and a set of broad themes, approaches and actions required to achieve these targets over the next 30 years. The strategy is based on the need for increased levels of understanding and awareness; the importance of integrating biodiversity conservation within development plans and policies; managing the landscape as a set of connected sites and the mobilization and support for civil and private sector organizations and institutions (such as local communities) to help achieve the conservation targets through sustainable natural resource management and innovative social and economic enterprises.

Provincial consultation was completed in July led by the Central Annamites Coordinator (Le Trong Trai) and overseen by Central Annamites Steering Committee. Eight provincial workshops were held in Vietnam attended by representatives of each stakeholder group from local communities up to the chairman's of the Provincial People's Committees. Each province commented on the results of the preparatory studies, the problem and threat analyses and the provisional landscape scale initiative plans. Each province also proposed broad action plans for their respective provinces and identified key projects relevant to their provinces. Based on the results of these consultations, a first draft of the strategy and action plan was prepared in August and September..

The document has been informally shared with a number key donor partners who have already expressed interest in funding some of the key activities and just as importantly are interested in adopting the approach for other landscapes in the Annamites. This is a significant success for the initiative as one of the key purposes of the adoption of focal landscapes was to promote replication to other critical landscapes. It is therefore imperative at this stage that the strategy and action plan represents a sound model for landscape scale conservation in Indochina.

The process has been stalled almost completely in Lao PDR as permission to develop the strategy has not been provided despite numerous approaches to the government. The Lao government is apprehensive about supporting activities that do not have any immediate financial support. In reaction to this, a new approach was undertaken. In July, a consultant was hired to prepare a project proposal that would encompass the needs of a strategy and action plan but is aimed at acquiring funds for action more immediately. The proposal was written through consultation at the provincial level. Funding is now being sought for the project.

Biodiversity Model for the Central Annamites

A biodiversity model for the Central Annamites was produced in August 2002. In April, a team from the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) together with staff from the Vietnamese Institute for Ecological and Biological Resources in collaboration with WWF undertook surveys throughout the Central Annamites to groundtruth satellite data in order to produce the first detailed vegetation model for the landscape. The team including vegetation, biodiversity and botanical experts collected data over one month from the field. The data was then analyzed in the laboratories in the New York headquarters of the AMNH . The model will be fundamental in developing future interventions and will be particularly essential for research and monitoring.

Spatial planning is a key activity for provincial conservation action. At present, mapping and evaluation is done at the central government level laboriously through old fashioned mapping techniques. In April, the GIS expert from the WWF Indochina Program trained staff from three government departments in Quang Nam province in the use of GIS as a planning and management tool during a week long course. The province is now able to prepare spatial comparisons between threats, poverty indicators and population parameters such as ethnicity and to produce a detailed habitat map for the province based on the vegetation model produced for the Central Annamites.

Improved Protection of Key Sites and Species

As of September, WWF established the necessary infrastructure and co-management capacity in the Song Thanh Nature Reserve for the effective protection of this priority site, as identified in the FLM biovision.

The project has improved the management of the reserve by providing essential basic equipment such as computers, telephones and motorbikes. It also provided funds to construct two “community outreach posts”. These stations represent an innovative approach aimed to link local communities with the reserve management. The concept of having protected area staff stationed in building dedicated to providing an effective interface between the reserve and communities is new to the region and interest in the concept has been expressed by staff of other protected areas in Vietnam and Cambodia. The project also provided critical training to Song Thanh Nature Reserve staff and local communities (not normally included in protected area training initiatives). The training was aimed to increase understanding of conservation principles, ecology of the Reserve, techniques for conservation such as environmental education. Reserve staff were specifically trained in developing participatory management techniques as the first step towards participatory management of the reserve. Activities were focused around the conservation outreach posts.

The project has not only been invaluable for Song Thanh, leveraging more funds from the province for conservation, but also has shown how a small investment in a protected area can be used effectively. This is particularly critical at this stage as the World Bank are preparing a sinking fund for protected areas in Vietnam based on small on a small grant scheme. The activities and progress reports have been used by the World Bank in the development of their critical project.

Business Partnership

An innovative mechanism for communicating the importance of biodiversity conservation and the Central Annamites Initiative is being piloted in Quang Nam province in Vietnam. The program has established a partnership with a popular tourist café in Hoi An town. Hoi An town is a World Heritage Site and is one of the principal tourist sites in Vietnam. The café has agreed through an MOU to display conservation awareness materials and hold small scale events to demonstrate the high conservation value, explain the threats to biodiversity and promote activities and projects in the Central Annamites such as the MOSAIC project in Quang Nam province itself.

Activity 2.2: Develop and strengthen the Conservation Initiative for The Eastern Plains, Dry Forests of Central Indochina Ecoregion

Threats from increasing settlement, agricultural expansion and road construction need to be deflected from priority areas in the Eastern Plains. It is critical that the last refuges of the once great herds of large mammals that characterize the Dry Forests are protected. In response, WWF continues to build the conservation program for the Dry Forests. The program is developing into one of first truly

ecoregion scale programs characterized by strong strategic partnerships, clearly defined priorities and actions and supportive action taken by the Cambodian government¹.

Site based actions have been balanced with landscape and ecoregion scale planning supported by profound changes to government policies on natural resource management. Significant steps have been taken over the last year, in partnership with the Cambodian government and non-government organizations working in the Dry Forests, to gain an understanding what is required to deliver effective conservation in the Eastern Plains. Based on this understanding, the priority over the last six months has been to prepare a conservation strategy for immediate, effective implementation of an ambitious set of interventions.

Conservation Strategy Development

The first step in the preparations of a conservation strategy for the Central Indochina Dry Forests is the development of a biological vision (biovision) for the ecoregion. In September, a team was compiled in Phnom Penh to develop a biological vision for the Central Indochina Dry Forests using the results of the June 2001 Dry Forests Workshop and subsequently gathered biodiversity data. The team included contracted international biologists, representatives from partner conservation organizations such as Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and Fauna & Flora International (FFI) and representatives from the Ministries of Environment (MoE) and Agriculture, Forests and Fisheries (MAFF). The team developed a methodology for the biological assessment to complete the biovision and a mechanism for consulting senior government officials and other stakeholders on the process and results of the assessment while it was being conducted.

An interim biovision was prepared at the immediate conclusion of the assessment. The final biovision will be produced in January 2003. The assessment and biovisioning process presents a set of systemically derived conservation targets for the Central Indochina Dry Forests, indicates the areas of highest conservation importance and proposes specific locations and actions required to achieve particular conservation targets.

One of the key recommendations for action resulting from biovision process was the need to provide immediate intensive protection for a representative component of the dry forest fauna in order to restore populations as rapidly as possible retrieving many species from the verge of regional extinction. A key output from the biovision process was the identification of five candidate sites where an intensive wildlife restoration intervention will be suitable. Feasibility assessments will be conducted in 2003, to identify the candidate site and proceed with the logistics and administration to develop the site.

The results of the assessment will be used by the partners working in the Dry Forests to lobby senior level Cambodian government official, partner NGOs and donor organizations for support for a major collaborative effort to implement the ambitious plan for the Eastern Plains and the Dry Forest Ecoregion.

Improved Protection of Key sites and Species

The Prime Minister finalized the designation of three new conservation reserves across the country, that will be managed by MAFF/DFW. These new areas are located in the Central Cardamoms, the Northern Plains, and the Eastern Plains priority landscapes. The Mondulkiri Protection Forest (MPF), with its 429,438 hectares, is the largest protected area in Cambodia. It borders on Lomphat, Phnom Prich, and Phnom Nam Lyr Wildlife Sanctuaries, and Yok Don National Park in Vietnam, creating the

¹ The Central Indochina Dry Forests fall within three countries – Lao PDR, Cambodia and Vietnam. However, the best opportunities for success fall largely within Cambodia and therefore the majority of the focus of activities are in Cambodia.

largest protected area complex in mainland Southeast Asia at 1,009,938 hectares. The Department of Forestry and Wildlife originally conceptualized this and other protection forests in 1999. The ecoregional workshops in March 2000 and June 2001 helped build momentum, enthusiasm, and scientific justification for the eventual designation of the MPF.

At present, WWF activities are focused on two sites within the Eastern Plains. One is Phnom Prich Wildlife Sanctuary, and the other is in Siem Pang District of Stung Treng Province.

Continued support to Phnom Prich Wildlife Sanctuary included:

- Supporting patrols by the 15 rangers to deter poaching and gather information about wildlife through visual sightings, tracks and other signs of their presence.
- Completion of the dry season program of camera trapping work, and continued work on analysis and reporting. Data obtained is very useful for the BA work previously described, and is part of a wider wildlife monitoring program that will be developed. Although many threatened species were caught on film, the most exciting event was the camera trapping of a herd of elephants, revealing a minimum of 43 individuals, including a minimum of 5 juveniles, indicating recent successful breeding.
- First aid training was provided to the rangers.
- The rangers went on a study tour of Kirirom, Ream, and Bokor National Parks, which are the most intensively managed national parks in the country. The tour gave the rangers a better idea of the different components of PA management.
- A report on the gold mine situation inside the PA was prepared and submitted to MOE, and plans were developed to send an MOE inspection team to the PA in the forthcoming dry season.
- A delegation from the MOE office in Phnom Penh was supported to go to Mondulkiri Province to meet with provincial government and military officials there to clarify some issues regarding the boundary of the Wildlife Sanctuary.

Continued support to the Stung Treng area included:

- Similar work with camera trapping, first aid training and the study tour.
- Plans were developed to extend work in the Siem Pang area across the border to Laos with forthcoming funds from another grant.
- A collaborative rapid biodiversity survey with Birdlife International and WCS was planned for early November to identify priority habitats for globally threatened species such as White-shouldered Ibis, other large waterbirds, river sandbar bird species, and Eld's Deer. This area is threatened with a proposed 100,000 ha. teak plantation.
- Work could not commence in Lomphat because of delays associated with the GEF grant for the Eastern Plains.

Please note that other activities in the Eastern Plains particularly those associated with community based conservation have been transferred to the report section on MOSAIC reported under Activity 3.1.

Wildlife Law Enforcement

During the reporting period, WWF Cambodia worked with the TRAFFIC officer in Cambodia to design and implement a survey of the wildlife trade in the four provinces in northeastern Cambodia. The official report of that survey will be released soon, while the draft results are being used as part of the consultation for the Biological Assessment for the Dry Forests. WWF also contributed to the TRAFFIC publication of a Khmer language manual describing Species In Trade in Cambodia, that has been distributed to border police, army, and customs staff throughout the country.

Objective III: Promote a supportive policy environment for conservation and sustainable natural resource management

Result 3.1: Community Management of Natural Resources: The MOSAIC Project

Management of Strategic Areas for Integrated Conservation (MOSAIC) engages local communities in developing and maintaining management systems to protect the biodiversity of the Greater Annamites and the Central Indochina Dry Forests and maintain the integrity of indigenous tenure. It facilitates cooperation among communities, provincial officials and national agencies in conservation and participatory land-use planning. The project has been launched within each of the focal priority landscapes in the FLM. Both of these projects have been designed on a two-year project cycle.

MOSAIC in the Eastern Plains, Central Indochina Dry Forests Ecoregion

Resource Rights and Responsibilities Awareness and Education Activities

Key events and activities related to this component were:

- Continued review and refinement of written materials, diagrams, role plays and other materials for extension on the Land law, Forest law, CF Sub-decree, Commune law, Fisheries Law, etc. The initial materials were prepared during the previous reporting period.
- Preparation for a workshop in Ratanakiri on extension materials and methodology during October 2002. The request for this workshop was made by local organizations who want to use the materials developed by the WWF team during earlier activities trainings and workshops. The workshop in Ratanakiri is supported by WWF, Partnership for Local Governance, NTFP, BPAMP/WB and other organizations. The workshop is an opportunity to share concepts, ideas and materials for natural resource management and relevant laws as well as to develop methodologies and raising awareness on resource rights and responsibilities for local communities. It will also contribute to networking and sharing experiences among local organizations in order to better collaborate on similar activities across the landscape in the future.

Sustainable Management Systems

The MOSAIC team organized a Workshop on Shifting Cultivation (swidden agriculture), held in Monduliri Province from August 13-17. The workshop involved CBNRM team members, provincial counterparts, and protected area rangers.

The objective of the workshop was to provide workshop participants with an understanding of basic elements of swidden farming, including the swidden cycle, social aspects of swidden agriculture at the village level, the ecology of swidden agriculture and natural resource management, and the political debates surrounding swidden agriculture (e.g., deforestation, biodiversity conservation, modernization, etc.). An important goal of the workshop was to demonstrate the complexity of the issues surrounding swidden agriculture (i.e., that the system is neither 'primitive' nor 'ideal', but must be understood using good data and taking into consideration the whole system, including fallow lands and forests). Similarly, the workshop sought to provide participants with a framework with which to organize information about swidden agriculture, to aid in the preparation of, for instance, case studies, and to serve as a basis for informing policy decisions and the design of conservation and development interventions such as participatory land use planning (PLUP).

Discussions of social equity and sustainability, and an attempt to link these ideas to the changes facing shifting cultivators (and, therefore, to the kinds of development interventions which are likely to be successful in swidden systems), were some of the more difficult concepts to be dealt with during the workshop. Unlike in Ratanakiri, where field-level staff have had several years experience with concepts of traditional rights and have sought to deploy intervention strategies which strengthen

traditional tenure systems, and thereby encourage those aspects of swidden agriculture which are complementary to sustainable natural resource use, it was clear that field staff in Monduliri are not yet making this connection. Thus, while the workshop was successful in demonstrating some of the logic of the swidden system, and in demonstrating the complexity of the problems which cause deforestation and irrational resource use (land pressure, immigration, legal and illegal logging, etc.), it was more difficult to discuss, question, and deepen our understanding of some strongly held beliefs about the undesirability of some aspects of swidden agriculture. There seemed to be a good deal of support, for instance, for the conversion all swidden agriculture to wet rice agriculture which may have serious impacts on biodiversity.

MOSAIC in the Central Annamites, Greater Annamites Ecoregion

The full Central Annamites MOSAIC team was recruited and in place within the new field office established in Quang Nam provincial headquarters by April. The project was initiated during a week long series of stakeholder meetings to decide on the problems facing Quang Nam and how the project can facilitate solutions. The conclusions of the workshop were presented at a provincial level workshop in the provincial headquarters in Tam Ky town in September, including representatives from all of the provincial government departments to ensure full stakeholder participation. The final output was an agreed annual workplan.

While the project is supporting the development of a provincial conservation plan, pilot activities with local communities have begun in three pilot sites, selected through consultations with provincial and district level officials and with villagers and commune leaders. Activities will include development of village resource use regulations and allocation of land for community level administration.

Biological assessments and landscape planning

Biological surveys were conducted in four separate locations in areas defined as strategically important and representing four different units of the landscape based on topography, altitude, rainfall patterns and forest type. The surveys included assessments of large mammal, birds, butterflies, vegetation, amphibians and reptiles and fish undertaken by a team of Vietnamese and International scientists. Species and habitat priorities were obtained, using the lists provided from the survey, through a weighted ranking exercise during which provincial Forest Protection Department staff participated fully and provided weightings based on provincial desires and aesthetic values. These conservation priorities and priority communes for more focused work were agreed to during the provincial workshop. The information is critical to the development of our understanding of the patterns of biodiversity, ecological processes and priorities for conservation and supports the development of a detailed conservation plan for the province as part of the overall initiative for the Central Annamites Landscape.

Community participation and resource use assessments

In order to obtain base line data for monitoring project impact and to enable effective project activity design and implementation a PRA was initiated over the 21 priority communes decided at the provincial workshop. A PRA toolbox was developed, piloted in one commune and published in Vietnamese. The pilot commune (part of Song Thanh Nature Reserve) was used to achieve two goals; 1) to test and adapt the PRA toolbox and method of delivery and 2) to act as a training of trainers for the provincial PRA teams. Twenty-four people from 10 different provincial departments were trained during the pilot initiative. These people then became team leaders as they returned to their districts and trained district government staff. The PRA was conducted over 21 communes in 8 districts and 125 villages. Twenty-four trainers were trained and over 50 government staff conducted the survey which interviewed more than 3500 people from across the 12 ethnic groups of Quang Nam. This activity obtained huge provincial consensus for the process of integrating communities into conservation activities.

The PRA in the pilot commune was followed up with a detailed assessment of local community and institutional capacity, land use potentials and forest land ownership and conflicts. The results of this assessment and of the PRA were analyzed and presented in a report:

Hardcastle, J., 2002. *Opportunities for indigenous community management of forest resources of the Central Truong Son uplands in Quang Nam*. WWF-Indochina and Quang Nam FPD, Hanoi and Tam Ky.

This report was distributed to all relevant provincial stakeholders and sparked interest by the province in WWF assisting in a new provincial programme of land allocation. The province has now held consultation meetings with all partners including community leaders in an attempt to incorporate the findings of the report into their program. Main foci for the changes are a) establishing a locally applicable community management unit rather than a provincial-wide unit, so accommodating all situations and ethnicity, b) establishing community management groups to manage and protect allocated forest land, including training, c) training of provincial agents in effective and culturally sensitive allocation processes, d) HCVF's will be identified and managed appropriately.

The first 'Village Protection Groups' were agreed upon and funding assured by the district for the pilot site in a consultation workshop. This involves 9 village groups, one for each village in the commune. This should lead to the effective management of the buffer zone of Song Thanh Nature Reserve in this location. Follow up activities in this site are priorities for phase 2 of MOSAIC in Quang Nam.

The project is proving to be a highly successful pilot not only for establishing a mosaic of complimentary land-uses but also demonstrating the how to lever conservation activities by working at the provincial scale rather than at individual sites.

Activity 3.2: Promote Sustainable Forest Management

Cambodia

Key activities and developments in regards to sustainable forest management and other natural resource management and conservation laws and policies in the reporting period are:

- a. The Forestry Law was passed by the National Legislature. Although community development and conservation NGOs and donors recognize that the law still has some weaknesses, it is widely viewed as an achievement that will help the process of reforming the concession system.
- b. The Community Forestry Sub-Decree, after going through a participatory consultative process, has been approved the DFW and is now in review by the MAFF. One benefit has been the adoption of this consultative process in development of other legal instrument within Cambodia, such as the Protected Areas Law, and the Fisheries Law.
- c. WWF Cambodia has continued to spend a lot of time and effort contributing to the reform of the Forest Concession System in Cambodia. The work is being done in cooperation with other NGOs and donors such as the World Bank, ADB, DFID, Danida, and GTZ. Some key activities have been:
 - Working to ensure public disclosure of concession management plans (just submitted at the end of September) and a sufficient period of time for public comment, as well as a critical review of management plans that are widely expected to be sub-standard in terms of timber inventory, environmental and social impact assessments, and other key areas. In September, the World Bank announced a delay in the delivery of a tranche of the Structural Adjustment Credit until the concession management plans were made public.
 - Working to expand the forthcoming mid-term review of the World Bank's Forest Concession Reform Project to look at broader issues, such as a review of the entire forest sector reform

process over the past several years. A key question is whether the remaining forest concessions really can be pushed in the direction of being more environmentally sustainable, socially equitable, and economically beneficial to the entire country rather than a few individuals, or should the current system be scrapped and replaced with something else. The expansion might be within the World Bank Project review process, or done in an external, parallel fashion. WWF Cambodia is discussing with various stakeholders whether the Alliance's "The Pyramid: A Diagnostic and Planning Tool for Good Forest Governance" would help this process, and there is a growing interest from donors such as GTZ and DFID, as well as some NGOs. Unfortunately, DFW does not want to use anything that has "World Bank" associated with it due to the previously mentioned delay in one of the tranches of the SAC.

The timber concessionaires and their corrupt associates with influence over key government officials have made working in forest sector reform a long, slow and generally painful experience. One recent defeat was an unsuccessful attempt to gain permission to survey high conservation value forests in concessions within the Central Cambodian Lowland Semi-Evergreen Forests, a landscape classified as critically important during the FLM biovisioning process. The request was blocked by the forestry production office within DFW.

Lao PDR

The formulation of a new forest strategy until 2020 for Lao has commenced. During the development phase there will be a focus on land use and forestry, production forestry, village land use and forest management for poverty alleviation, tree plantation development, wood processing industry and wood export and environment and conservation. WWF has been invited to contribute during the development of this strategy and will use the opportunity to ensure that biodiversity conservation sustainable forest management issues are prominent within the final draft, which is due in February 2003.

Forest Certification promoted in Lao

During August WWF designed and co facilitated a national level workshop on forest certification and sustainable forest management in Lao. Some headway had been made in the past with the promotion of forest certification in Lao, but this became stalled when the project which was leading the initiative ended in 2000. The workshop in Vientiane made significant steps towards putting certification back on the agenda and building awareness and support amongst government and private sector individuals.

Vietnam

WWF has continued to support the FSSP through representation of the international NGOs in the Technical Executive Committee. In this role WWF has contributed to the development of a Forest Research Action Program and Forest Sector manual, ensuring that both take biodiversity conservation, the landscape approach and sustainable forest management into account.

National Working Group strengthened

WWF has recently assisted the Vietnam National Working Group on Sustainable Forestry to plan a National workshop on encouraging sustainable forest management and forest certification. It is intended that the workshop will help the NWG to identify the various outstanding issues which they will need to address to ensure that the group can be endorsed and the Vietnam Criteria and Indicators for Forest Management can be approved by the FSC.

Feasibility studies conducted

Following the decision between WWF and the Netherlands Government to transfer the Kon Plong Project to a new location a pre feasibility study was conducted in July within three state forest enterprises in the Central Annamites. The Netherlands Government has since encouraged WWF to

expand the pre feasibility study to include SFEs in proximity to the Cat Tien National Park and in neighboring Lam Dong Province. This additional pre feasibility study will be conducted before November. Following this WWF will hold discussion with the RNE to identify the best options for the development of a new project.

New projects funded

WWF has recently obtained funding for two projects forest certification related projects in the region. The WWF/World Bank Alliance have agreed to fund assessments of Village Forest Associations in Savannakhet and Khamoune provinces in Laos. The initial assessments will commence in November and be followed by full assessments in 2003. If successful these will be the first ever forest areas in the Greater Annamites to become certified.

The other project funded is for the Promotion of Sustainable Forest Management in Vietnam, Lao and Cambodia. Activities which range from improving forest management for certification and combating illegal logging, should commence by the end of 2002 and continue for three years. These will be conducted with the assistance of two new forest officers (one each for Lao and Cambodia) hired under the project.

Activity 3.3: Promote the control of illegal wildlife trade in Lao PDR

Activities under this project were concluded in the previous reporting period. Since the conclusion of the project, the application for Lao accession to the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) has progressed significantly. The application is now on the desk of the Prime Minister and his agreement to pursue accession is reported to be very promising. This represents very significant progress as the Lao government has stalled on the accession for many years. The progress of the application has been facilitated by the success of advocacy components of this project. Follow on activities are being prepared in partnership with TRAFFIC and the government of Lao PDR. However, no action will be taken until the government succeeds in their application for accession to the Convention.

Objective IV: Lay the foundation for lasting conservation

Result 4.1: FLM Ecoregion Information System

Information System Reviewed and Reconstructed

The design and structure of the information system has been finalized after analysis of its functionality. The main role of the system is to provide users with easy access to a wide range of up-to-date information on the FLM ecoregions, and with this in mind extensive revisions were made in attempt to make the system more user friendly. Following the completion of the design and structure, work is now commencing on gathering and inputting data for the system. In parallel to this process, a more rudimentary information storage system was established and maintained to allow users to access ecoregional data. This rudimentary system has already been accessed by a broad cross-section of users, including the Vietnamese Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Netherlands Development Organization (SNV), and local press agencies.

The Information System has been the key resource tool used in the development of two communication outputs produced within the last six months: an Interactive CDrom promoting the Greater Annamites and an improved website. These outputs are described in more detail under Activity 1.1.

Activity 4.3: Community Participation for Conservation Success: Promoting community participation towards effective conservation of Vietnam's natural heritage through community-based Environmental Education

The disbursement of funds from the US Department of State EAPEI program for this project was delayed. The implementation of this project started in August 2002 when project funds were received. Since August, the critical tasks required to establish effective project implementation were undertaken and are now finalized. Preparations and planning for the input workshop to be held at the end of February and the Training of Trainers course to be held in July 2003 have now begun and will form the key focus for activities over the coming months.

Project implementation preparation activities included:

- Five official meetings were held between Xuan Mai staff and WWF. negotiation and clarification of the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders and details of the mechanics of how the project will be implemented.
- A detailed project schedule was developed. The schedule includes the timing for the input workshop, the training of trainers course, the 4-month student course, and the evaluation workshop.
- A set of terms of reference for a National Working Group was developed through discussion between WWF and Xuan Mai University and the members have been selected by the Dean of Forest Resources and Environment Management.
- Two key staff members have been identified and contracts completed. A consultant with extensive experience of developing environmental education curricula in Vietnam has been hired and a volunteer from the World University Services of Canada (WUSC) has been hired to provide the main technical and administrative support to the project throughout the two years of its implementation.
- Existing materials available in country in relation to environmental education and curriculum development have been collated.

Objective V: Marine Conservation Initiatives for Con Dao National Park

Activity 5.1.

Coral species previously unrecorded in Vietnam found around Con Dao

In August and September, Dr. Lyndon DeVantier of the Australian Institute of Marine Science conducted a 10-day survey of coral species diversity, community structure, cover and present status at 19 locations around the Con Dao Islands. In total, some 280 reef-building coral species, plus 20 other corals and related species were recorded.

Eleven of these coral species are new distribution records for Vietnam. Field identifications and photographs were not sufficiently definitive to allow precise species identification of all corals present, and it is hoped that detailed taxonomic study may reveal additional species, new distribution records and undescribed species. The present survey recorded ca. 80 species and 1 genus that were previously unrecorded from the islands. Notable absentees from the present species list were the branching pocilloporid 'needle corals' and hydroid 'fire corals', these genera are particularly sensitive to bleaching-induced mortality and their populations on Con Dao Islands have been decimated following the 1998 bleaching event.

Following on from this survey, a number of management recommendations to protect the coral reefs of Con Dao have also been proposed and are currently being incorporated into existing plans.

Status review of coral reefs at Con Dao National Park

In May, a scientific survey on the state of coral reefs at Con Dao National Park was conducted at seven locations around the park. The surveys were conducted by Nha Trang Institute of Oceanography, in collaboration with staff of the Park who have previously been trained in 'Reef Check' techniques.

Feasibility study on coral rehabilitation for Con Dao National Park

In June, a survey was conducted by Dr Edgardo Gomez, a coral rehabilitation expert from the Marine Sciences Institute of the University of the Philippines. This survey was carried out in collaboration with Nha Trang Institute of Oceanography in order to study the coral reef rehabilitation possibilities and to choose suitable areas and methodologies for rehabilitation. Meetings were held with Con Dao National Park staff, local authorities and local communities regarding coral rehabilitation plans, opinions, regulations and concerns.

After completion of the survey, some of coral rehabilitation methods were developed and presented to CDNP's staff to enable them to select the most technically, physically and financially suitable ones to be applied in Con Dao. The survey also provided some findings and recommendations for follow-up actions.

A map of the proposed coral rehabilitation zone has since been drafted and submitted to local authorities for approval. The pilot area has also now been demarcated and publicly announced.

Dugong survey and research project development

Two dugong scientists working in Thailand visited Con Dao in July to assess the viability of the seagrass habitats and to make recommendations for strengthening dugong conservation and linking efforts with other areas in Vietnam and the Gulf of Thailand.

Raising public awareness on marine turtle conservation and marine conservation

During August, four environmental interpretation camps were organized for nearly 100 pupils of the seventh and eighth grades of Vo Thi Sau secondary school. They visited Bay Canh Island to learn about the roles of mangroves and other ecosystems such as coral reefs and sea grass beds, and their relationships in the food web. They had the opportunity to study sea turtles and sea turtle conservation at Bay Canh Island in detail and gain an understanding of the importance of these species.

The Conservation Club established at Con Dao also held some environmental education sessions for Con Dao schoolchildren from the fourth, fifth and eighth grades. There were 240 participants in the two club sessions, entitled 'Conservation Club' and 'The Trees are Our Friends'.

Con Dao National Park staff participates in Cambodia marine turtle research and conservation workshop

In September, Con Dao National Park's turtle conservation project leader, Nguyen Truong Giang, gave a presentation on the turtle conservation work in Con Dao to more than 50 participants of the groundbreaking Cambodian marine turtle workshop. The workshop represented an excellent information sharing opportunity, as well as a vital step in developing relationships on turtle conservation between the countries – the importance of which was highlighted by Mr. Giang when he explained about a turtle flipper tag that was found in Cambodia in 2000, and was traced to a turtle tagged in Con Dao in 1999.

Workshop on sharing experience of marine biodiversity conservation

A 2-day workshop was organized at Con Dao National Park in June 2002 with the purpose of exchanging experience in environmental resource conservation and of providing information on legal documents relevant to fisheries resource conservation.

Participants in the workshop included Con Dao National Park staff, a representative from Con Dao district people's committee, local fisherman and the National Department of Aquatic Resource Conservation (DARC). All the knowledge and information gleaned from the study tours to Malaysia (in June 2001) and Thailand (in March 2002) was raised and discussed. In addition, the current legal perspective in relation to aquatic resource conservation was explained.

The successful completion of the project has provided the first critical steps to ensure the successful development and implementation of a much larger scale project to be supported by DANIDA and GEF.

Table of Progress

<u>Benchmark Number</u>	<u>Benchmark/Output</u>	<u>Status*</u>
1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steering Committee for Greater Annamites in Lao established Dry Forests Coalition formed (informally being done) Meeting between the two national steering committees for the Greater Annamites held 	Delayed Completed Cancelled
1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training workshop and communications strategy completed Dry Forest study tour conducted Video for the Annamites produced Video for the Dry Forests produced CD-ROM for the Annamites produced 	Completed Completed Completed On-track Completed
1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action Plan (and M&E plan for the Greater Annamites produced Action Plan (and M&E plan) for the Dry Forests produced 	Completed Completed
2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biodiversity model produced Song Thanh start up project Strategy and Action plan completed and endorsed by governments and partners 	Completed Completed On-track
2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landscape Manager appointed Provincial zonation plan for Monduliri completed Rights and Responsibilities awareness activities conducted Wildlife law enforcement activities conducted 	Completed Scaled-down Completed On-track
3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biodiversity surveys conducted Studies on hunting practices and resource use completed Model for community based M&E established 	Completed Completed On-track
3.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued promotion of sustainable forestry practices in Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam WWF as signatory of the Vietnam Forest Sector Support Partnership 	On-track Completed
4.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ecoregion Information system established 	Completed
4.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable finance mechanisms identified 	Delayed
4.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Participation for Conservation Success project implemented 	On-track (delayed because of funding delay)

5.1	<p>Con Dao, Vietnam:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A report and set of baseline data explaining the present status of the coral reef ecosystem completed. • A team of park staff and their families trained as trainers in sustainable management of marine natural resources. 	<p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p>
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* Status may include activities that are completed, on-track, delayed, mixed performance, or cancelled.

Next Steps

Ecoregional Scale

Communications

Following up on the communication strategy and action plan developed in August 2002, a series of communication activities will be implemented including the preparation of series of easily up-datable brochures and leaflets linked closely to a website, production of awareness materials about the Dry Forests, a study tour for Cambodian officials to India and a number of high-profile articles in international magazines and newspapers featuring success stories achieved under the program.

Root Cause Analysis and development of policy level interventions

The final steps towards a fully developed analysis of the threats to biodiversity and the requirements needed to prepare an action plan with key partners will be conducted as part of a Root Cause Analysis. The results of the root cause analysis will be used to identify the key policy areas that require reform to tackle some of the key issues related to achieving conservation targets.

Landscape Scale

Eastern Plains, Central Indochina Dry Forests

Development of an intensive wildlife management area

- The final biological assessment report will include the identification of five candidate sites for the development of an intensive wildlife management area. Activities in the next six months will be aimed at undertaking a feasibility study of the five sites. The study will include draft plans for the final nominated area. These plans will be part funded by a GEF Medium Size Brief which should be completed and funds secured within the year. The plan will be developed in more detail and will be used as the basis for a fundraising effort.

Natural resource management policy reform

- Staff of WWF Cambodia will continue ongoing input to development of Community Forestry Sub-Decree, and to draft Protected Area Law and will participate in the review of the concession management plans and other efforts to reform the Forestry Sector. Working with the other partners working in the Dry Forests, the plans for establishing the institutional capacity to enforce the new wildlife laws will be developed. Implementation of the plans will follow immediately depending on the availability of funds.

MOSAIC

In Monduliri, Cambodia:

- The Community Based Nature Resource Management (CBNRM) team based in Cambodia will complete the PLUP training and other preparations for community mapping activities in early 2003. The training workshop planned to be held in Ratanakiri Province on the Rights and Responsibilities related to natural resource management will be finished.

- The CBNRM team will follow-up on the initial Participatory Biodiversity Assessment activities, including refinement of species and habitat data, and improve mapping of important geographic features. This return trip will also allow evaluation of the data by the communities, which was not possible during the initial visit, and the MOSAIC team may choose to identify long-term community monitoring counterparts.

Central Annamites, Greater Annamites Conservation Strategy

The final consultations on the Strategy and Action plan for the Central Annamites Initiative at the national and provincial levels will be finalized. A team will prepare the first scoping assessment for a monitoring and evaluation plan for the Initiative and a team will prepare a business and investment plan for the Initiative.

Additional surveys will be conducted to further refine the biodiversity model based on data gaps identified this year.

As accessibility to the field increases, additional biological surveys and hunting practice assessments will be undertaken and implementation of three community managed forests will start.

MOSAIC

In Quang Nam, Vietnam:

- Next six months will be focused on activities that can be undertaken in the wet season such as the compilation and analysis of the Participatory Rural Appraisal data collected from the 122 villages surveyed last year, the development of education and tourism feasibility assessments and further skills training for provincial staff

Success Stories

Ecoregion conservation, characterized by the larger scale of effort, greater cooperation and wider stakeholder involvement and strategically delivered interventions was a new concept for biodiversity conservation in the region only three years ago. At the beginning of the program, the concept was not fully understood and there was a high degree of skepticism and suspicion. Through patience, persistence and guidance, the ecoregion program has drawn in an increasing level of support and cooperation. In the last year, techniques such as landscape planning, biological visioning processes, strategy development and strategic partnerships have been demonstrated and are now being taken up by wide number of stakeholders from conservation organizations to international donors. In the Annamites, conservation targets at the ecoregional scale are now widely accepted and partnerships to tackle specific issues such as the intensive wildlife trade or to manage large scale programs such as in the Central and Northern Annamites and are now being forged. When the program in the Central Indochina Dry Forests was suggested in 2000, no conservation action was on-going in the ecoregion. Within just two years, a full ecoregional scale of intervention has been initiated led by WWF, WCS and Fauna & Flora International in cooperation with Cambodian, Lao and Vietnamese governments with support from a wide variety of donors.

Despite the challenges, it is now realistic to believe that within the next two years, the Annamites and the Central Indochina Dry Forests ecoregion programs will be established meeting ecoregion scale targets, implementing integrated programs at the landscape scale, piloting innovative conservation solutions and tackling critical, urgent needs at sites of the highest immediate conservation priority.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

Capacity limitations

As the program develops, strategies and action plans finalized, projects developed and funding secured, the greatest limitation to the program is the capacity at all levels by both government and non-government staff to implement the program. The region is facing a crippling shortage of skilled, motivated and knowledgeable people to drive conservation agendas and achieve the level of conservation success to tackle the enormous intensity of threats associated with three countries undergoing rapid economic and social development. For example, it is extremely difficult to convey to people with no experience in Cambodia how low capacities are in provinces such as Monduliri, even if people have experience in other developing countries. The greatest challenge faced by the program is the need to increase the level capacity to tackle issues and manage biodiversity before the rapid destruction of the biodiversity of the Forests of the Lower Mekong has lost its globally significant value forever.

Handling complexity

A key lesson learned this year is the need to develop a program supported by effective communications and that has the ability to be flexible and ready to react to opportunities. As the complexity of the program develops and strengthens, it is becoming increasingly difficult to communicate the variety of approaches, issues, projects, achievements and lessons learned to partners and stakeholders in the region and outside of the region. The development of a communication strategy and action plan (prepared in August 2002) supported by an increase in the capacity of the communications unit supporting the program therefore has been very timely. In addition, the development of strategies and action plans involving an increasingly wider set of partners and actors has in turn increased the number and scope of opportunities available to tackle issues and develop partners. While the programmatic and partner based approach has improved the strategic opportunities to achieve a greater impact, the level of coordination and consultation required is now placing further restrictions on the program. The ecoregion team together with the government and non-government partners will be need to find new methodologies for cooperation, consultation and strategic organisation of interventions. This is a new challenge for all the partners but one recognised by all to be one that if overcome will have a very significant benefit for biodiversity conservation in the region. Each organisation is ready to face the challenge and the progress that this new level of cooperation and scale of intervention promises is recognised by all as the greatest opportunity for the region to halt the rapid loss of biodiversity in the region.

Sulu Sulawesi Marine Ecoregion

Strategic Goals & Objectives

The ultimate goal of WWF's marine conservation program in the Sulu-Sulawesi and Banda-Flores Seas is to enhance the long-term ecological and economic sustainability of the natural resources and biological diversity of these high priority marine ecoregions. In a biological prioritization (Biodiversity Vision) workshop facilitated by WWF last year, a group of over 80 regional scientists and conservation managers articulated the following biodiversity vision statement for the Sulu Sulawesi Marine Ecoregion:

"A marine ecoregion that remains a globally unique center of biodiversity, with vibrant ecological integrity, including all species, assemblages, communities, habitats, and ecological processes. A highly productive ecoregion that sustainably and equitably provides for the socio-economic and cultural needs of the human communities dependent on it. An ecoregion where biodiversity and productivity are sustained through the generations by participatory and collaboration management across all political and cultural boundaries"

To help achieve this vision, WWF is developing a network of conservation efforts in priority areas across the Sulu-Sulawesi and Banda-Flores Seas. Bunaken and Bali Barat Parks are key anchor sites for this network of conservation areas. WWF is using conservation programs at sites such as Bali Barat and Bunaken as a launching pad for the expansion of conservation effort both across a network of sites in the marine ecoregions and in areas adjacent to these high priority sites. By establishing a strong model for multi-stakeholder conservation at Bunaken and Bali Barat National Parks, WWF is helping to demonstrate which approaches can be successful, thus setting the foundation for expansion to adjacent and other priority areas of the SSME and Eastern Indonesian Seas. WWF is spearheading this expansion while working with numerous partners to help support their efforts to expand conservation. Other priority areas where WWF is working are found throughout the Philippines and Malaysia, such as Balayan Bay, Northeastern Sabah, Northern Palawan, the Cagayan Ridge, and others. In addition, WWF is working with TNC and others toward expansion of conservation efforts into the Sangihe Talau Islands in Northern Sulawesi and is setting up programs in Bali to generate funding to help support conservation both throughout Bali and Eastern Indonesia.

WWF's long-term goal is to create an ecoregion-wide network of MPAs, but international tensions between the SSME countries makes this difficult at present. To lay the groundwork for the international cooperation necessary for such a network, however, WWF is working to develop a conservation strategy to protect marine turtles, a priority species for conservation in SSME. Success on this more discrete initiative will serve to build trust between the three countries. Malaysia and the Philippines are already cooperating on the protection of the Turtle Islands Heritage Protected Area (TIHPA), making the addition of Indonesia a relatively short step. Tri-national management of this species is crucial as Indonesia is home to the largest turtle nesting area in the three countries and is also a major user of marine turtles. The initiative will emphasize expanding the existing marine turtle strategy for the TIHPA to the much larger area between Sabah, Malaysia, the Sulu Archipelago, Philippines, and East Kalimantan, Indonesia (referred to as the Tri-National Area.). Once the tri-national area for turtle conservation is established, the multi-country cooperation can be expanded to cover other priority conservation concerns in the ecoregion.

Under this USAID funded project, WWF's Ecoregion Conservation approach is supported by three mutually reinforcing objectives:

- Enhancing conservation action at critical marine sites in the Sulu-Sulawesi Seas and Banda-Flores Seas.
- Enhancing the sustainability of conservation action by creating and expanding long-term financing mechanisms.
- Formulating a tri-national strategy to protect marine turtles and their habitats as a first step to creating a tri-national ecologically representative network of MPAs across the SSME

Collaborators/Partners

Objective I

- Bunaken National Park Authority – North Sulawesi
- Management Board of Bunaken National Park
- NRM II – USAID Project
- North Sulawesi Watersports Association (NSWA)
- Team Raja Laut- Bunaken
- Government of North Sulawesi
- Bali Barat National Park Authority – Bali
- Dive operators / sports association in Bali (Gahawisri)
- Tourism association in Bali
- Bali Government (Environmental Bureau and Maritime & Fisheries Agency)
- Bali Barat-based Resorts Hotels
- Police and Navy Forces in Bali
- Department of Maritime and Fisheries
- Marine Aquarium Council

Objective II

- Puerto Galera Local Government Municipal Council and Chief Executive, Philippines
- WWF-Southeast Asia Policy Programme Office

Objective III

- Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service
- Fisheries Department of Sabah, Malaysia
- Sabah Parks, Malaysia
- Wildlife Department of Sabah, Malaysia
- Ministry of Marine and Fisheries Affairs, Indonesia
- Office of the Ministry of Environment, Indonesia
- BAPELDA (Local Environment Office), Indonesia
- Sangalaki Dive Lodge, Indonesia
- Derawan Dive Lodge, Indonesia
- Hotel Sederhana, Indonesia
- Sub Seksi KSDA (Sub-district Office for the Conservation of Natural Resources), Indonesia
- PARIWISATA (Tourism Office), Berau, Indonesia
- Kalbu (Local NGO), Indonesia
- Bestari (Local NGO), Indonesia
- BKSDA Kaltim, Indonesia
- Youth Organization of Derawan, Indonesia
- KEHATI (Local NGO), Indonesia
- Badan Kesatuan Bangsa and Linmas (Social and Political Office), Berau, Indonesia
- Bupati (Head of Berau District), Indonesia
- Community Leaders and members of Derawan Island

- The Indonesian Coastal and Marine Foundation
- Ministry of Forestry, Indonesia
- Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Philippines
- Maritime and Ocean Affairs Center, Department of Foreign Affairs, Philippines
- Bantay Pawikan, Inc., Philippines

Summary

Objective I: Enhancing conservation action at critical marine sites.

WWF continues to intensify efforts to help local constituencies manage and conserve the outstanding resources of the two pilot sites, Bunaken National Park in North Sulawesi and Bali Barat National Park in Bali. Some of the most notable accomplishments of the program within this reporting period include:

- The establishment of the Bunaken management board and the increased involvement of the local community in patrols have increased partnership effectiveness in the management of the park in Bunaken.
- The Bunaken entrance fee system, newly implemented in 2001, was highly successful due to the active involvement of the patrol team in enforcing the system – both in routine daily boat checks and during bi-weekly “sweeping” operations where all boats and all land-based tourists on Bunaken Island were checked for compliance. While there was significant resistance by backpacker tourists during the initial months of the entrance fee, continuous checks by the patrol team and a concerted socialization effort by the Bunaken Management Board resulted in an estimated 90% compliance rate by. A total of over \$41,000 was collected by the entrance fee system in 9 months, capturing revenues from approximately 5000 foreign tourists from 39 countries and over 9000 local visitors.
- Socialization of the conservation goals and laws governing sustainable use of marine resources in Bunaken National Park to the approximately 30,000 villagers living within the park is an ongoing and long-term process, but has made great progress with the active implementation of the patrol system. Patrol team members were trained to patiently but firmly explain zonation rules and national conservation laws to villagers (and tourists) in violation of these laws. Socialization has been assisted by the installation of 30 village information signboards that post laminated brochures explaining the park’s goals, the patrol team, protected marine species, and efforts by villagers to protect the marine resources of the park.
- Significant reduction in the use of compressors and cyanide for capture of live reef fish around Bunaken and Manado Tua Islands and southern section of park after 5 major arrests and publicized court processing. While cyanide operations still exist on Nain and Mantehage Islands, the violators are now well known and are targeted for future undercover operations.
- Flagship fisheries species are being surveyed by the WWF fisheries program and will become a critical part of communications efforts on flagship species regarding economic and conservation value.

Objective II: Enhancing the sustainability of conservation action by creating and expanding long-term financing mechanisms.

(Please note activities under this objective were initiated in June 2002 with the release of funds from a 2002 EAPEI grant to WWF).

There are several factors important to sustaining marine conservation activities in the SSME. These include sufficient institutional capacity, skilled staff, strategic decision-making, and sustainable finance. Sustaining the flow of funding for conservation activities depends on at least two key factors: 1) development of sustainable conservation financing mechanisms; and 2) institutionalization of effective management of conservation funds.

Initiated in June 2002, various project activities will be conducted in two sites in the Philippines and at one site in Indonesia. Sites in the Philippines are Balayan Bay, Batangas in Southern Luzon and Puerto Gallera in Mindoro. These areas have been identified as priority conservation areas through WWF's Biodiversity Vision Workshop and each have both considerable threats and good opportunities to build sustainable financing mechanisms primarily through tourism fees. Puerto Galera is a Man and Biosphere Reserve and also a site of considerable tourism. As a result, it is an excellent candidate for conservation financing activities.

Implementation Activities:

1. Review legislation to identify obstacles and opportunities for conservation finance
2. Develop "willingness to pay" survey and administer at three project sites
3. Estimate user fees and investigate other innovative revenue generation schemes
4. Consultative identification of best institutional regimes for collecting and disbursing funds
5. Development of mechanisms including conservation fees, tourism fees, landing taxes, trust funds and other mechanisms for the generation and management of conservation funds

Two temporary staff was contracted to initiate the project in Puerto Galera. Project phase-in includes: 1) mobilization; 2) project team operations planning; 3) project briefing for Municipal Council and Local Chief Executive; 4) elicit community leaders support.

Progress to date includes:

- Consultation meetings with local government units;
- Consultation meetings with local business operators including hotels, tour and dive operators;
- Office donation from local Dive Association for the duration of the project.

WWF staff will implement a "willingness to pay" survey with dive tourists from November 2002-May 2003.

Objective III: Formulating a tri-national marine turtle protection strategy.

WWF launched this new program by establishing the necessary institutional framework to support tri-national cooperation, initiating outreach and advocacy efforts, and starting to build the necessary capacity to create an effective strategy. Notable accomplishments within this reporting period include:

- Agreement among the three countries to expand to Indonesia the trans-boundary protection of turtles between Malaysia and the Philippines
- Agreement to set the time-frame of the program to 10 years;
- Ambassador Encomienda of the Philippines noted the importance of the tri-national turtle cooperation and suggested that the SSME Directorate make a presentation at the forthcoming meeting of the Joint Commission on Bi-lateral Cooperation (between Malaysia and the Philippines).

Results by Objective and Activity

Objective 1: Enhancing conservation action at critical marine sites in the Eastern Indonesia and the Sulu-Sulawesi seas

Currently, most if not all marine conservation/protected areas in Indonesia are insufficiently managed to ensure the long-term persistence of their critical marine resources and their ecological integrity. There is too little marine sciences and management capacity among individuals, too little awareness on the ecological and economics importance of the parks and other reef areas, too little support for conservation action directed against exploitative uses, and too few financial and human resources to handle management needs. As a result, the critical marine resources at numerous important marine sites continue to decline, including those harbored in Bunaken and Bali Barat National Parks. Enhancing conservation action to protect and restore healthy marine ecosystems is accomplished through partnership development, empowerment, and magnification of experience in a particular area to other important sites. Strengthening stakeholder partnerships is particularly crucial in this era of decentralization. The initial sites for this initiative are at Bunaken and Bali Barat National Parks.

Activity 1.1.1: Monitoring & Enforcement

In Bunaken, as stated in the project implementation plan, WWF is drawing on its skills to facilitate community involvement and strengthen existing patrolling efforts by members of the North Sulawesi Water Sports Association (NSWA) and the new developed Bunaken Management Board. Similar to previous work, WWF is intensifying monitoring and enforcement in partnership with Park Authorities, the Bunaken Board, NRM II, Dr. Mark Erdmann (Coelacanth researcher, NRM consultant, and advisor to WWF) dive operators, local NGOs, and communities. In Bali Barat National Park, intensification is focused on the patrolling activities supported by villagers living in the adjacent marine-park, as well as the park authority and the existing dive operators and resorts established within the park area.

Accomplishments during the reporting period:

- Complete cessation of blast-fishing in the dynamite-plagued southern section of Bunaken National Park as a result of two undercover joint operations in April/September (with related arrests) and the subsequent implementation of southern section joint village patrol system in October (as reported by local village chiefs and NGO observers).
- Significant reduction in the use of compressors and cyanide for capture of live reef fish around Bunaken and Manado Tua Islands and southern section of park after 5 major arrests and publicized court processing. While cyanide operations still exist on Nain and Mantehage Islands, the violators are now well known and are being targeted for future undercover operations.
- Significant decrease in zonation violations on Bunaken and Manado Tua Islands, especially with regard to spearfishing and gillnetting in tourism and strict conservation zones and with unregulated collection of live corals and beach sand for village construction.
- The release of captured endangered wildlife in the southern section of the park, including two dugongs (a mother and her calf), as well as 6 green turtles and 2 hawksbill turtles.
- Strong cooperation with provincial and district fisheries offices in clarifying that commercial fishing is not allowed anywhere in the park, including re-issue of all existing fishing licenses with specific written exception for Bunaken National Park.
- Apprehension and processing of illegal mangrove cutting operations on Mantehage and Bunaken islands and in southern section of park (including probation and confiscation of chainsaws and illegally harvested wood).

- Implementation and enforcement of ground-breaking park entrance fee system that succeeded in collecting over \$41,000 in 9 months, capturing revenues from approximately 5000 foreign tourists from 39 countries and over 9000 local visitors.
- Installation of 30 village conservation information signboards around the park to inform villagers of conservation news, patrol activities, protected species and new zonation rules

Activity 1.1.2: Encourage environmentally sound science-based management

Often park managers and regional planners issue policy on resource-use patterns and development opportunities without adequate support of scientific-based data. As a result, many management plans based on such policies are not effective in the long term. WWF, therefore, is committed to help park managers and regional planners to improve their abilities in environmentally sound conservation management, which will achieve lasting results.

Accomplishments during the reporting period:

Flagship fisheries species are being surveyed by the WWF fisheries program (cofinancing to the EAP-EI grant) and will become a critical part of communications efforts on flagship species regarding economic and conservation value.

Objective III Formulating a tri-national strategy to protect marine turtles and their habitats as a first step to creating a tri-national ecologically representative network of MPAs across the SSME.

Activity 3.1. Development of a Strategic Plan for the Comprehensive Protection of Marine Turtles across the Tri-National Region of Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines

Among the agreements reached at the tri-national turtle conservation workshop held in Berau, Indonesia on 1-3 April 2002 were:

- to expand to Indonesia the trans-boundary protection of turtles between Malaysia and the Philippines
- to limit the area of the Tri-National Turtle Conservation Program to the Sulu-Sulawesi Marine Ecoregion;
- to set the time-frame of the program to 10 years;
- to assign the SSME Directorate to provide the interim coordination while the inclusion of Indonesia to the Joint Management Committee (JMC) for Turtle Islands Heritage Protected Area (TIHPA) has not been formalized

In line with these agreements, the Directorate worked with the Philippine Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau (PAWB), co-chair of TIHPA, to initiate talks on the need to elaborate and formalize the interest of Indonesia to accede to TIHPA. The Philippines recognized this to be of important concern thus a meeting of the Philippine JMC was convened on 24 May 2002. Among the points discussed were the advantages of expanding TIHPA to include a site in Indonesia. For example: the expanded TIHPA can be a vehicle for other opportunities. The tri-country collaboration can serve as nucleus of turtle conservation in Southeast Asia.

The expansion site in Indonesia forms part of the habitat requirements in the life cycle of turtles. Evidence gathered to date includes a hawksbill turtle that nested in Selingan Island in Malaysian TIHPA was found in East Kalimantan; and a green turtle tagged in Baguan Island in Philippine TIHPA was found in Derawan Island, Indonesia.

The Philippine JMC meeting expressed support to include Indonesia in the transboundary conservation of turtles. The meeting authorized Romeo Trono, Director of WWF SSME Program, with guidance from the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs, to have initial talks with the Malaysian JMC about the interest of Indonesia to be part of the JMC and the positive reception of the Philippine JMC to the idea.

On 4-7 June 2002, the SSME Director had a series of meetings with the Director of Sabah Parks, co-chair of JMC, the State Office of Wildlife Department and the State office of Department of Fisheries for the following purposes:

- To present the results of the tri-national turtle training and workshop held in Indonesia
- To convey the message of the Philippine JMC regarding its openness to the idea of getting Indonesia on board the JMC of TIHPA
- To propose that Indonesia be invited to the Sixth Meeting of the JMC of TIHPA in August 2002

The series of meetings secured the approval of Malaysian JMC to invite an Indonesian delegation as observers to the 6th JMC meeting.

The 6th JMC meeting was held in Manila on 5-6 August 2002. The Indonesian delegation was composed of representatives from the Department of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries and the Government of Berau, East Kalimantan. The Head of the Malaysian delegation likewise expressed support to the concept of tri-national turtle conservation but withheld comments since they have not obtained approval to engage in discussions. The Head of the Indonesian delegation likewise expressed support to the tri-national concept and said they required more time to deliberate on the formal agreement. Finally, Ambassador Encomienda of the Philippines noted the importance of the WWF's presentation on the results and recommendations of the tri-national turtle training and workshop and suggested that the Directorate present the same in the forthcoming meeting of the Joint Commission on Bi-lateral Cooperation (between Malaysia and the Philippines).

Table of Progress

<u>Benchmark Number</u>	<u>Benchmark/Output</u>	<u>Status*</u>
1.1.1 Monitoring and Enforcement	Total elimination of destructive fishing practices in the park	On track
1.1.2 Environmentally sound, science based park management	Applied conservation sciences in marine park management	Some early delays, but now on track
3 Partnership and Flagships	Established strong partnership for sustainable management of the park	Completed
4 Communication Strategy	The conservation program is adopted by stakeholders	On track
3.1	Agreement by the Governments of Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines to participate in the development of a Tri-national Strategy for the Conservation of Marine Turtles in the SSME.	On-Track-official documented agreement in development
3.1.1	Much improved knowledge and skills among important management agencies for the management and conservation of marine turtles	On-Track
3.1.2	A cooperative Tri-national Strategy for the protection of marine turtles	On-Track

* Status may include activities that are completed, on-track, delayed, mixed performance, or cancelled.

Eastern Himalayas Ecoregion: Terai Arc Landscape

Strategic Goals & Objectives

The goal for the entire Eastern Himalayas ecoregion is to conserve representative facets of biodiversity within habitat areas that are large enough to support the natural ecological and evolutionary processes that maintain the ecoregion. The Terai Arc Landscape program was launched in order to restore and maintain wildlife corridors that link 11 protected areas between Nepal's Parsa Wildlife Reserve and India's Rajaji National Park in order to meet the larger vision of the ecoregion. The objective of the Terai Arc Landscape (TAL) is to conserve the biodiversity, soils and watersheds of the Terai and Churia hills in order to ensure the ecological, economic and socio-cultural integrity of the region. Forests connecting these protected areas are in various stages of degradation and fragmentation due to human population and poverty pressures. Restoring wildlife corridors will facilitate the dispersal and genetic exchange of wildlife populations, ensure the long-term survival of key endangered species, and provide ecological and socioeconomic services integral for the well being of local communities.

The proposal submitted to USAID focused on seven components of this objective:

- Forest Regeneration through Protection
- Community Forestry
- Enhanced Livelihoods (Community Development)
- Anti-poaching Activities
- Improved Management of Protected Areas
- Transboundary Agreement
- Establishing Monitoring Methodology

Collaborators/Partners

- USAID
- United Nations Development Program (UNDP)
- Netherlands Development Agency (SNV)
- Integrated Centre for Mountain Development (ICIMOD)
- Department of Forests, HMG Nepal
- Department of National Parks and Wildlife, HMG Nepal

National and community level organizations that WWF partners with include:

- King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation (KMTNC)
- Women in Environment
- Environmental Camp for Conservation Awareness (ECCA)
- Buffer Zone Councils
- Village Development Committees
- Local User Groups
- Community Based Organizations including women's groups

Partnerships to work on the Terai Landscape are being sought with:

- DFID
- CARE

Summary

Despite the political unrest throughout the country during this reporting period, TAL program has successfully implemented set activities in the field through full participation from local communities and community based organizations including Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs), Community Forest Coordination Committees (CFCCs), and women's groups.

Activities that were carried out in full strength include the establishment of thirteen nurseries, which produced 330,000 mixed seedlings that were planted in 212 ha of community forestlands in corridors and bottlenecks in TAL during this reporting period. During this period, 5 community forests, covering 299.5 hectares of degraded forest area were handed over to local communities in Dovan. In addition, 4 community forest operational plans were prepared, while 18 CFUG constitutions were prepared and registered in respective district forest offices. Anti-poaching efforts were successful with 17 Anti Poaching Units (APUs) operating in four protected areas in TAL and 3 community-based APUs operating along forest corridors. To support these efforts, an anti-poaching strategy meeting was held in Chitwan in September to formulate a national level anti-poaching strategy.

TAL program continued to focus on increasing participation of local stakeholders and concentrated on disseminating information. Products included a conservation newsletter, *Kael Pahura*, which is being published and distributed on a quarterly basis, a TAL fact book, brochure and video, all of which were distributed to community-based organizations, VDCs, NGOs and government agencies. TAL program focused on awareness building with results including the formation of 36 new eco-clubs, 2 eco-club networks at Basanta and RBNP Buffer Zone, as well as 4 literacy classes for 125 local livestock herders. Educational materials were developed including audiovisual programs for conservation awareness, various training manuals, and environmental education kits known as *Sampada Sandook*, which were prepared and distributed to schools in project sites. Awareness raising efforts also included workshops on forest management training and income generation planning, and street theatre shows with wide outreach.

Community development activities were carried out in various communities of Bardia, Banke, Kailali, Kanchanpur, Dang and Palpa, including installation of improved cooking stoves in 906 households, promotion of stall feeding alongside corridors and bottlenecks, construction of 53 biogas plants, and the handing over of health post materials in the buffer zone of Royal Bardia National Park (RBNP).

Highlights

Transboundary Meeting Held

A national level transboundary meeting between the governments of Nepal and India was held from the 13th to the 15th of September. The meeting was hosted by HMG Nepal, Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation and supported by WWF Nepal Program. Outputs include a 12 point resolution with the agreement to set up a joint Transborder Consultation Committee to monitor the progress on landscape based conservation, particularly the restoration of migratory corridors for megaspecies such as the tiger, rhino, elephant and swamp deer in the Terai Arc. Information sharing was highlighted in the resolution and will involve quarterly field level meetings, identification and

implementation of research programs and the establishing of a transboundary level mechanism that involves all relevant government agencies.

TAL Partnership Coordination Continued

A series of meetings were held in September with key international institutions including USAID, DFID, SNV, CARE and UNDP, all of which work on forest and natural resource management and sustainable development issues in the Terai Arc Landscape Nepal. The meetings were initiated to propose a process of coordination, particularly where there is overlap amongst institutional strategic objectives and interests in TAL, led by the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation (MFSC). These partners or potential partner agencies have been invited to provide input into the planning of the Terai Arc Landscape Strategic Plan and participate in all TAL planning exercises and workshops, including the upcoming Root Causes of Biodiversity Loss Research Training Workshop that will be held in December 2002.

TAL Policy Pursued

A field level stakeholder interaction workshop was held in Nepalgunj, Banke District in September to address the need for a clear TAL policy document. Participants were asked to review a document developed by Dr. Uday Raj Sharma, Chief of the Environment Division in MFSC, "Draft Policies and Strategies to Implement the Terai Arc Landscape in Nepal" and provide their feedback. A total of 59 participants including community based organizations, local NGOs, community leaders, journalists as well as representatives from MFSC, Department of Forests (DoF), Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC), Ministry of Agriculture and WWF Nepal attended the workshop. Comments and feedback were all incorporated into a draft document, which will be ultimately submitted to the Government of Nepal for endorsement following additional consultation.

Results by Objective and Activity

Despite continuing political upheaval in Nepal, fieldwork was carried out successfully in the Terai during this period. Some activities were minimized given the practical limitations caused by the continuation of conflict and the State of Emergency in the country on movement and large assemblies. These include activities involving capacity building of park and other government staff and the collection of data on forest cover and wildlife for biological monitoring purposes. However, activities that were led by field staff based in local communities have continued to be greatly successful. Feedback from communities was overwhelmingly positive with appreciation voiced to field staff who choose to be present in the field even in this political instable remain in many areas of conflict and direct appeals for their continued presence.

Activity 1: Description: Forest Regeneration through Protection

Forest regeneration activities continue to surpass the set objectives for this reporting period. 13 nurseries including 2 agro-forestry nurseries were established to produce and distribute 330,000 mixed tree seedlings, including 20,000 NTFP seedlings for community and private plantations. In addition, another 10,000 mixed species tree seedlings were purchased from private nurseries. Plantation was carried out in 212 hectares (ha) using 340,000 seedlings. During this reporting period, 586 ha of forest corridor was restored through a combination of community plantation and natural regeneration in degraded areas along corridors and bottlenecks.

To set up the research and monitoring component of the TAL program, GIS data on land use, local level administrative boundaries, contours, roads and settlements that were digitized and stored in the TAL GIS system. In addition, 8 satellite images covering the entire TAL area were procured and vegetation classification and analysis initiated with a completion target set for March 2003. The

satellite data will be used to develop Vegetation Monitoring Protocol for TAL and establish permanent growth plots for regular vegetation monitoring in future. The satellite information will also be used as baseline data to assess the impact of the TAL program on forest corridor restoration for a given timeframe.

Activity 2: Description: Community Forestry

Strengthening and institutionalization of Community Forestry Users' Groups (CFUGs) is critical for the restoration of degraded forest areas along corridors and bottlenecks. During this reporting period, a total of 5 community forests, covering 299.5 ha of degraded forest area were handed over to the local communities in the Dovan bottleneck. In addition, 18 CFUG constitutions were prepared and registered in the respective DFOs of Basanta and Katarnia corridors and Lamahi bottleneck while 4 CFUG operational plans, 2 in Basanta and 2 in Katarnia, were prepared and are currently being submitted to respective District Forest Offices (DFOs) for endorsement. Furthermore, emphasizing the importance of people's participation in conservation, with the support from TAL program 4 Community Forest Coordination Committees (network) in Basanta, Katarnia, Lamahi and Dovan were formed and registered in respective district forest offices. In addition, TAL program has been strengthening and implementing its activities from the existing community forest user group network formed by EFEA (USAID supported project). The Community Forest Coordination Committees (CFCCs) play a key role in networking, empowering, sharing experiences and mobilizing various CFUGs within and outside their network for conservation and implementation of Integrated Conservation and Development Programs.

During this reporting period, four study tours were organized for 116 (27 women and 89 men) members of CFUGs. The participants visited areas where successful community forest management practices have been promoted through the initiative of local people. The participants also visited protected areas within TAL to learn more about effective forest management and biodiversity conservation in buffer zone areas. During this reporting period, a total of 16 community forestry management trainings and workshops were organized for 307 participants including 96 women from various CFUGs and government line agencies in TAL. The trainings and study tours were useful for effective and efficient forest management by local communities and to motivate CFUG members about plantation, forest regeneration and patrolling activities in their respective community forest area.

Activity 3: Description: Enhanced Livelihoods (Sustainable Development)

The success of landscape level conservation programs depends on the cooperation and participation of local communities in conservation programs. Participation of local people, who in the case of TAL are mostly poor farmers dependent on forest resources, are enabled if they receive immediate benefits from conservation programs. Activities such as income generation activities, livestock improvement and capacity building continued during this reporting period. While these activities were developed partly as a means of fostering a trusting relationship, they were also designed strategically to lead to biodiversity conservation in the region.

Stall-feeding ultimately reduces open grazing in forestlands, thus minimizing forest degradation while simultaneously enhancing income generation potential of local farmers through increased productivity of their livestock. Distribution of improved livestock breeds increase productivity of livestock, diversify household income, promote stall-feeding and thus, minimize grazing in national forests. During this reporting period, various improved breeds of livestock including female goats (65), chickens (550), 4 male breeding buffaloes and 20 male breeding goats were distributed in local villages. To support improved livestock programs, three livestock management training sessions and cow shed management as well as a poultry farming training were organized for 142 participants (42 women) in Basanta and Katarnia corridors as well as 52 households in Mahadevpuri. Community awareness on

livestock stall-feeding was generated through training, tours, and workshops. In addition, stall-feeding was promoted through the distribution of 36 feeding troughs in Katarnia corridor. Stall-feeding, which greatly reduces pressure of grazing on forests was also indirectly promoted through the production of fodder-tree seedlings in multi-purpose nurseries for private plantation (Activity 1).

Continuing efforts to minimize local dependence upon fuelwood gathered from national forests, 53 bio gas plants with attached toilets and 906 improved cooking stoves were installed in corridors and bottlenecks during this reporting period. In addition, a month long training was organized for 3 persons from Basanta area on bio gas plant installation and maintenance to both localize capacity training and provide alternative income generation for the 3 households. Similarly, three improved cooking stove installation trainings were organized for 35 local people (14 women and 21 men) along the Basanta corridor.

Forest plantation goals were combined with the need for alternative income generation and two NTFP nurseries were established in Katarnia Corridor and Dovan with the financial and technical support from the TAL program. A total of 20,000 NTFP seedlings were produced and distributed for plantation, consisting of Harro (*Terminalia chebula*), Barro (*Terminalia belerica*), Banana (*Musa* sp.), bamboo (*Dendroclamus* sp.), and cane (*Calamus* sp.) In order to protect crops from wildlife predation, two *Machans* (Watchtowers) were constructed with the support from TAL program in RBNP buffer zone.

Capacity building is a major component of the TAL program that will ensure long-term sustainability of the program and provide the foundation of local community participation in conservation and development activities. Trainings, workshops and study tours were designed for local people and CBOs on forest management, species conservation, income generation and awareness building activities. During this reporting period, four *gothala* (livestock herders) education classes for 125 livestock herders were completed and 36 new ecoclubs formed to foster environmental awareness. Two ecoclub networks were also formed at Basanta and Bardia. Finally, two gender sensitization trainings were carried out for 34 participants including 13 women, belonging to CBOs and government field staff at Bardia and Lamahi respectively.

Activity 4: Description: Anti-poaching Activities

Anti-poaching efforts have continued including general patrolling for poaching activities in all protected areas within TAL, operation of the 17 Anti-Poaching Units (APUs) in protected areas and 3 Community Based APUs in forest corridors. While poaching figures have risen sharply in the last year, the Royal Nepal Army (RNA) and protected area staff worked as a team to conduct patrolling in and around the protected areas. However, sweeping operations (in Royal Bardia National Park) could not be conducted due to the State of Emergency first declared in November of 2001.

Following the anti-poaching strategy meeting at Royal Chitwan National park in February of 2002 organized by DNPWC, which reviewed anti-poaching activities and strategies in parks and critical areas, a meeting was held in Chitwan on the 3rd of September, 2002, to formulate a national level anti-poaching strategy. Efforts included 5 anti-poaching training sessions organized for the units patrolling the forest corridors and the construction of four APU posts are coming to a completion. The two APU posts in Arjuni, situated at the eastern sector of RSWR and the other two posts in Hattisar and Parewawodar at RBNP were started in April of this year. These posts will serve to monitor rhino and wildlife movement as well as watch for illegal poachers in areas that are vulnerable to wildlife poaching.

Activity 5: Description: Improved Management of Protected Areas

The TAL program supported the construction of 4 waterholes in RBNP and RSWR, without which wildlife would not have enough water for the dry season. Additionally, 250 hectares of grassland was placed under management in RBNP and RSWR where invasive species were removed, unwanted bushes cleared and grasses burned by the park authorities.

Management training was provided to DNPWC and DoF staff on habitat and wildlife management. In coordination with TAL program, 80 rangers and game scouts were provided training in anti-poaching and biodiversity conservation. Educational materials published by DNPWC was distributed to the trainees. The materials included 1600 copies of "CITES Manual", which were also distributed to park staff, DoF staff, conservation partners. Furthermore, DNPWC also published 700 copies of the CITES poster and 5,000 copies of booklets on CITES implementation with the support from TAL Program. These materials are particularly useful to park staff who use it in the buffer zone areas to generate conservation awareness and prevent poaching.

Activity 6: Description: Transboundary Agreement

Most of the illegal activities such as wildlife trade, poaching, illegal timber trade and collection of endangered species of orchids and other plants occur along the Nepal and India border. To achieve the objectives of TAL, transboundary cooperation and collaboration is necessary. Unfortunately, previous attempts to set up a transboundary meeting failed due to the political unrest in Nepal. However, the third Nepal –India transboundary meeting was held in Kathmandu between the 13th and 15th of September. Based on the need of transborder relations, the third Nepal-India government level trans-boarder meeting was held in Kathmandu on 13-15 September 2002. The meeting was organized jointly by Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation and WWF Nepal Program and was facilitated by WWF Nepal. Participants from India included Mr. SC Sharma of Ministry of Environment, staff from the Indian Embassy in Nepal, Chief Conservator of Forests from three bordering states; Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal, as well as three WWF India representatives. Nepalese participants included representatives from Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, Department of Forests and Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, park wardens, District Forest Officers and WWF Nepal staff. The delegates signed a resolution to coordinate activities from both countries on TAL and set up a joint committee to monitor progress on regular basis.

Activity 7: Description: Establishing Monitoring Methodology

TAL program hired Dr. Anup Joshi as a consultant in order to develop the TAL biological monitoring at two spatial scales – landscape and site level monitoring. Landscape level monitoring includes GIS and Remote Sensing (RS) information to analyze land cover, land use change, habitat fragmentation, habitat loss, and coarse scale intactness of critical corridors and bottlenecks. 8 satellite images covering entire TAL have been identified and procured. The data has been processed and later on the data will be verified in the field. Dr. Joshi is currently working to rectify satellite images and analyzing data for forest classification with colleagues at University of Minnesota. Based on the satellite images, the aggregate result of the analysis generated 36 classes (28 classes from the original cluster analysis and 8 classes from reclassification of classes 10 and 17). After 36 classes were generated, an analysis of attribute and distribution of classes were done by using similar colors to represent those classes that have similar characteristics. Later on these classes needs to be verified in the field. Security situation in Nepal has delayed field verification to analyze data. More rigorous field verification is planned for March 2003. By the end of June 2003 final version of classification will be presented. Due to the security situation in the field, the field verification work has been delayed.

Similarly, site scale monitoring has been planned for habitat structure, disturbance and vegetation compositions, regeneration in restoration areas, focal species (presence or absence, relative abundance, demographic trends) and water quality as an indicator of both aquatic and terrestrial habitats. Department of Forest Research and Survey (DFRS) will carry site level vegetation monitoring of TAL. A detailed work plan with methodology has been developed for vegetation monitoring and establishment of permanent growth plots in TAL. Later, a Vegetation Monitoring Protocol will be developed for TAL.

The satellite data stored in the GIS system can be used as baseline data while monitoring vegetation change over time. In addition, the baseline data can also be used to analyze wildlife dispersal more particularly tigers in Terai Arc Landscape.

Table of Progress

<u>Benchmark</u>	<u>Output</u>	<u>Status</u>
1.1. Obtain GIS Mapping and ground truthing results	Accurate GIS maps of forest conditions with detailed layers on community forests in pilot sites produced by June 2002. Forest classification cross analysis produced by June 2002. Establishment of database unit by September 2002.	1. Completed 2. On track 3. Completed
1.2. Collect baseline data on wildlife in the Terai	Baseline data on wildlife distribution of mammals, birds, and plants in the Terai produced by June 2002. GIS baseline database unit established at WWF office, later to be housed with the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation by June 2002.	1. On track (birds completed) 2. On track
1.3. Establish natural regeneration plots	Mixed tree species seedlings produced for plantations in the Basanta and Katarniaghat corridors for FY02. 250 ha of regenerated forests in the pilot sites during FY02. 100 ha of fallow community and government forests in the two corridors under restoration in FY02.	1. Completed 2. Completed 3. Completed
2.1. Establish and Strengthen Community Forest User Groups	5 Community Forest User Groups formed and institutionalized during FY02 in the two corridors (Basanta and Katarniaghat). 4 Operational plans developed for community forests in the corridors. Empowerment and participation increased of CFUGs in the local communities during FY02. Empowerment increased to women's participation in CFUGs.	1. Completed 2. Completed 3. On track 4. On track
2.2. Build capacity of government implementing agencies	25 government field staff trained successfully in community forestry and gender mainstreaming during FY02. Increase in participation of local communities in planning, managing and developing of conservation activities as a result of better-trained forest officials.	1. Completed 2. On track
3.1. Identify and initiate meeting locally defined needs in the Basanta and Katarniaghat corridors	Local needs identified and pilot programs launched in the two corridors, which will possibly include safe drinking water, health care facilities, alternate energies and education opportunities. New interventions regarding income generation sources will be identified and initiated following rapid assessments held by consultants to identify locally defined priority needs within the pilot sites.	1. On track 2. On track
3.2. Protection of crops	Reduction in incidences of crop damage by wild animals based on 2001 figures.	1. On track

from wildlife in villages bordering the corridors		
4.1. Establish APUs in wildlife corridors under restoration	Two APUs in wildlife restoration corridors set up Two posts established (costing \$6,000 each), one in Basanta forest area and one in Katarnia area. Poaching incidents in pilot wildlife corridors decreased from figures derived from baseline data.	1. Completed 2. Completed 3. On track
4.2. Improve radio communication system and coordinate anti-poaching efforts within protected areas	Improved inter-departmental communication system and coordinated anti-poaching effort Trained manpower and better communication system in place	1. On track 2. On track
4.3. Provide training for government officials as well as local communities	Government officials and local communities trained in anti-poaching efforts through series of three training sessions during FY02. Developed anti-poaching manual by June 2002.	1 On track 2. Delayed
4.4. Design landscape level anti-poaching plan with coordination system in place for Nepal side of the Terai	Regional anti-poaching plan developed for Terai Landscape of Nepal by June 2002.	1. Delayed
5.1. Provide park staff with training and improve communications	Three staff trained in GIS and computer courses by June 2002 Two guard posts in the Bardia extension area, will be built and handed over (This activity will depend upon the gazettelement of the area by HMG).	1. Delayed 2 Canceled (shifted to RSWR)
5.2. Manage wildlife habitat in the Bardia National Park extension area	Park management strengthened through procurement of vehicles, field gear and survey equipment. Develop buffer zone committees surrounding the extension area where settlements are currently found. Grassland habitat study completed by October 2002.	1. Delayed 2. Delayed 3. Delayed
6.1. Facilitate international dialogue and cooperation between Nepal and India	Two consultative meetings held will result in a declaration on collaboration and cooperation regarding Terai Arc management. Signed transboundary agreement between Government of Nepal and Government of India obtained following the declaration. Cooperation on transboundary issues such as illegal trade control gained by 2002.	1. Completed 2. Meeting held and (resolution signed) 3. On track
7.1. Carnivore Survey in	Draft handbook on carnivore survey with illustrations of tracts from survey by December	1. Delayed

TAL	2001. GIS map showing transects surveyed, location of each tiger tracts and scent-post stations by May 31, 2002. A database of carnivore tracts established during survey by June, 2002. Detailed report with protocols to carry out tiger and carnivore surveys by June, 2002.	2. Delayed 3. Delayed 4. Delayed
7.2. Monitoring of Birds in TAL	A geo-referenced map of bird monitoring transects by July 30, 2002. A list of rare, threatened, and endangered species of birds of TAL by July 30, 2002.	1. Completed 2. On track
7.3. Establish baseline data on socioeconomic conditions in corridor areas	Socioeconomic baseline data collected. Use of forest resources monitored.	1. Completed 2. On track

Note: some of the activities were delayed due to field security situation

Next steps

The TAL program, which is jointly implemented by HMG Nepal and WWF Nepal Program took on Large Program Management Planning with the help of a Task Force that consisted of experts from Goldman Sachs and McKinsey, scientists, forestry experts, and socioeconomic experts in this year as a means of developing a large scale plan that would address all the needs and issues of the project on a landscape level. One of the priorities of the plan consists of developing a coordination mechanism with TAL stakeholders at central and field levels that can lead to the successful scaling up and implementation of current activities. Another component involves building partnerships with institutions that work on conservation and development issues in the Terai. Memorandums of Understanding have been signed by WWF Nepal with UNDP, SNV and ICIMOD, all encouraging cooperation on a landscape level. WWF will continue to pursue close relationships with these and other partners, including national NGOs and CBOs. Moreover, mobilization of local people is critical for TAL to be successful and will continue to be prioritized in the following year. More field level stakeholder meetings will be organized in forest corridors and bottlenecks to promote participation of local people, government line agencies and donor agencies in the strategic plans and activities that are drawn up for project sites.

TAL will continue to be actively engaged in achieving integrated conservation and development activities for biodiversity conservation and community development. WWF NP will draw on its previous experience with ICDPs, particularly the successfully implementation of BICP at Bardia. Project activities, particularly those dealing with community services, infrastructure development and income generation must be coordinated with the Village Development Committees, women's groups and youth clubs. Exposure tours, training and workshops will play a vital role for the success of the program. Hence, projects will continue to build the capacity of the local people, particularly on community forest management and income generation activities. The impact of these trainings is apparent in the way that CBOs have been mobilized to improve the forest conservation and confront the encroachment problem. In the meantime, these trainings are also useful among local people specially in promoting income generation activities. Literacy and conservation education programs will also be prioritized since they are very effective in generating conservation awareness among local

people and stakeholders. Women's involvement in resource management will be crucial in the long-term and their involvement will be promoted in every stage of program from planning and implementation to monitoring in the field.

Success Stories

Despite the political situation, the TAL program was enormously successful in gaining the involvement of local people in forest restoration and conservation. It is remarkable to note that the local people contributed approximately forty percent of actual cost in forest conservation and management in corridors and bottlenecks. In FY 02, 13 multipurpose nurseries with 330,000 seedlings production capacity were established where as 7 multipurpose nurseries with 175,000 seedlings capacity per year were planned. These nurseries were established as per the demand of forest tree seedlings from local communities and CBOs. This indicates that the demand for forest tree seedlings has been increasing every year for both community and private plantations.

TAL has received extensive support from district forest offices while planning, implementing and monitoring seedling production, plantation, community forest user groups legalization and institutionalization in corridors and bottlenecks.

Various field level stakeholder meetings and awareness generation programs were organized for governmental and non-governmental line agencies and the local people.

The local people's mobilization for conservation as well as DoF's involvement has been quite successful in the corridors and bottlenecks as a result more work than actual target have been achieve during this reporting period. For example 13 nurseries were established where as 7 were planned and 212 ha area has been restored through plantation where as 100 ha has only been planned in the last monsoon. 586 ha degraded land has been restored through plantation and natural regeneration along corridors and bottlenecks.

A good coordination mechanism has been developed at field level stakeholder and central level to implement TAL program. Furthermore, WWF Nepal Program has also developed good rapport with government line agencies working in the area. The program has also received support from local community, CBOs and NGOs from the local level.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

The reporting period has been a period of political upheavals for Nepal. The insurgency activities, that have been going on for over 5 years gained momentum in the rural parts of the country and entered the urban areas. The government of Nepal declared a state of emergency throughout the country from November 26th, 2001 till August 28th 2002. Still the political situation seems volatile in the field. Despite the extreme difficulties in the field brought about by the security situation, the field staffs of TAL program were able to accomplish the most of the target activities for the reporting period. This was possible only because the activities were implemented through local CBOs and government line agencies working at the grass root level.

The political instability and state of emergency provided opportunity for forest encroachment and poaching. Fortunately, the TAL program has been coordinating with District forest offices to remove illegal settlers in Basanta corridors. Illegal settlers of about 4,300 households were removed from

eastern sector of RSWR. Royal Nepalese Army at RSWR and RSWR staff started removal of illegal settlers from September 2001 to April 2002 with the financial support from TAL Program.

The extension area of the Royal Bardia National Park was declared by the then Prime Minister G.P. Koirala in November 2000, as a Gift to the Earth. The gazetting of the Extension Area by HMG/N was expected in 2001, however, it hasn't taken place so far. Therefore the activities such as the construction of sub head quarters, roads etc in the Extension Area could not be carried out during this fiscal year. Due to the delay in gazette notification by the HMG Nepal, the infrastructure work has been postponed. The budget was utilized for forest road construction in RSWR.